

POPE

Essay

on Man

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POPE
ESSAY ON MAN

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ALEXANDER POPE

POPE
ESSAY ON MAN

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PREFACE

THIS edition of Pope's *Essay on Man* is intended to supply the student with a readable text of one of the chief masterpieces of eighteenth-century poetry, and with a short commentary and notes, which may serve to elucidate the poem without becoming a formidable addition to it. The editor's obligations to previous editions are recorded at the end of the introduction.

A. H. T.

GRETTON,
NORTHANTS.

June 1913.

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INTRODUCTION

THE four epistles which constitute the *Essay on Man* were published separately at short intervals between February 1733 and January 1734, the first three anonymously, the last under the author's name. They were intended by Pope to form the first book of a versified system of philosophy, and 'to be to the whole work,' as he wrote in 1730, 'what a scale is to a book of maps.' The system, originally planned in four books, was limited in its later form to two books of *Ethic Epistles*. Of these the completed *Essay on Man* was the first: the five *Moral Essays* are portions of the second, the general subject of which was characterised by Pope as the Use of Things. Pope's habit of desultory composition, of writing isolated passages and connecting them as his fancy prompted him, was fatal to the completion of his design. The *Moral Essays*, which appeared under Pope's own name, are separate poems, published (with the exception of the fifth, which was written in 1715 and published in 1720) between 1731 and 1735, the period which covers the composition and publication of the *Essay on Man*. Their pretensions to philosophy are subordinate to their character as satire, and in this respect they offer a striking contrast to Pope's serious pursuit of his argument in the

Essay. Pope described them, or rather the contemplated whole of which they were to form a part, as 'a system of ethics in the Horatian way.' In the *Essay*, on the other hand, he changed the 'gaieties of Horace' for the 'grave march of Lucretius.' It is probable that he had some doubt of the reception which would be accorded to the more serious portion of his scheme. This accounts for the care with which he preserved the anonymity of the first three epistles of the *Essay on Man*. His contemporary publication of the *Epistle to Lord Cobham* (1733), with its more familiar treatment of human nature and its allusions to living persons, may have had the effect of concealing the fact, obvious though it may seem to our own day, that its acknowledged author was identical with the anonymous philosopher of the *Essay*.

Pope's general scheme was due to the advice of lord Bolingbroke, with whom he had been in close correspondence since 1724. Bolingbroke, deprived of any active participation in state affairs, had turned his versatile intelligence to the study of philosophy. His fragments of philosophical writing were not made public until some years after the *Essay on Man* had appeared. Their close correspondence of thought and of actual phrase with Pope's poem has been responsible for the theory that Bolingbroke plagiarised from Pope. The reverse, however, is the truth. Bolingbroke used Pope's genius to popularise his own ideas upon the government of the world and the relative happiness of man. Pope, in a letter to Spence, records that Bolingbroke supplied him with seven or eight sheets of notes,

‘both to direct the plan’ of his philosophical poem ‘in general, and to supply the matter for the particular epistles.’ These sheets or their contents are now included in Bolingbroke’s fragmentary writings, and it is impossible not to recognise that passages which, in Bolingbroke’s prose, would have been sterile imitations of Pope, are, in Pope’s verse, skilful adaptations from Bolingbroke’s arguments, and that their want of originality is compensated for by poetic genius. Most of these parallel passages are quoted in the notes to Elwin and Courthope’s definitive edition of Pope, and only a few representative examples need be noted here. Thus Pope writes (*Essay on Man*, i, 247):

‘And, if each system in gradation roll
Alike essential to th’ amazing Whole,’ etc.

Bolingbroke (fragment 42) writes: ‘We cannot doubt that numberless worlds, and *systems* of worlds, compose this *amazing whole*, the universe.’ Again (*Essay on Man*, ii, 23):

‘Go, soar with Plato to th’ empyreal sphere,
To the first good, first perfect, and first fair.’

Bolingbroke (fragment 58): ‘They *soar up on Platonic wings* to the *first good* and the first just.’ Pope simply adapts Bolingbroke’s phraseology to the requirements of his metre and of the more elaborate language of poetry. In ep. ii, l. 274

‘Hope travels thro’, nor quits us when we die’

is a briefer rendering of Bolingbroke (fragment 50): ‘Hope, that cordial drop, which sweetens every bitter potion, even the last.’ The whole argument of ep. iii,

enunciated in ll. 109—14, is founded upon Bolingbroke, e.g. (fragment 51): 'We are designed to be social, not solitary creatures. Mutual wants unite us, and natural benevolence and political order, on which our happiness depends, are founded on them.' Pope's idea (ep. iii, ll. 123—4) that love of children is merely an extended form of self-love in the parents is found in the same fragment: 'As our parents loved themselves in us, so we love ourselves in our children.' Lastly, in ep. iv, ll. 131 sqq., Pope, in arguing the difficulty of establishing a 'kingdom of the just,' merely versifies Bolingbroke (fragment 57): 'Christian divines complain that good men are often unhappy, and bad men happy. They establish a rule, and are not agreed about the application of it; for who are to be reputed good Christians? Go to Rome, they are papists. Go to Geneva, they are Calvinists. If particular providences are favourable to those of your communion, they will be deemed unjust by every good protestant, and God will be taxed with encouraging idolatry and superstition. If they are favourable to those of any of our communions, they will be deemed unjust by every good papist, and God will be taxed with nursing up heresy and schism.' These instances, selected out of many, will indicate the extent of Pope's debt to Bolingbroke. The debt was more than repaid by the permanent literary form with which Pope clothed these casual speculations.

The main subject of the *Essay on Man* is the apparent inequality of happiness upon earth. It attacks the one-sided conclusion that 'Man's imperfect, Heav'n

in fault' (ep. i, l. 69), and its object is to 'vindicate the ways of God to Man' (ibid. l. 16). The whole question was one which appealed to the general intelligence of the day, and Bolingbroke was not the only author whom Pope pressed into his service. There are remarkable parallelisms between passages in the *Essay* and arguments in the *De Origine Mali* (1702) of William King, archbishop of Dublin (d. 1729), the *Characteristics* (1711) of the third earl of Shaftesbury (d. 1713), the philosophical works of Samuel Clarke (d. 1729), and *The Religion of Nature Delineated* (1724) of William Wollaston (d. 1724). Pascal and Locke are also among the writers whose works were evidently consulted; while the *Fable of the Bees* (1714) of Bernard Mandeville (d. 1733) furnished a prominent portion of the argument of the second epistle. It is uncertain whether Pope read these authors for himself. He certainly knew Mandeville's book, which clothed a not very profound species of philosophy in a popular form; but it is likely that Bolingbroke may have directed his attention to marked passages in some of the others. It is quite certain that the theory, stated with qualifications by the late Mark Pattison, that the *Essay on Man* was intended to be 'an elegant version' of Leibniz's *Essais sur Théodicée*, is contradicted by Pope's own confession to Warburton in 1739 that he had 'never read a line' of Leibniz. Pope's philosophical reading was anything but wide, and his misleading allusions to ancient philosophy are proof that his interest in such subjects was superficial. It may fairly be concluded that such reading as may be traced in

the *Essay on Man* was guided and even defined by the advice of Bolingbroke.

Bolingbroke's attitude, however, was definitely hostile to revealed religion and Christianity. According to the Christian system, man is created in the image of God and derives his whole moral being from the effort to model his life in harmony with the ideal attributes of the Deity, and so effect his restoration to the state from which he has fallen. Against this Bolingbroke set the rationalistic explanation that the moral attributes of God were inconceivable by man and totally inconsistent with human ethics. This conclusion obviously makes any effort towards the divine impossible for man, and throws him back upon himself and the guidance of mere instinct. While vindicating the justice of God by assuming that it has no relation to human ideas of justice, it reduces the divine element in human affairs to a negligible quantity. To some extent this theory, conveniently suppressing what it cannot explain, is reflected by Pope. It may perhaps be inferred from the emphatic statement that 'the proper study of mankind is Man' (ep. ii, l. 2), which is repeated in a slightly different form in the last line of the poem. It is also shadowed forth in the daring speculation that Heaven may be deliberately responsible for certain aspects of moral evil (ep. i, l. 155 sqq.)—i.e. that what seems to man a breach in the moral world is perfectly consistent with divine attributes of which he has no knowledge. In any case, while God is recognised as the Universal Cause upon which the whole chain of being depends, as the soul of each order

of His creatures and of the whole creation, and as dispensing happiness in proportion to the requirements of each state, man throughout the poem is left to 'follow Nature's road,' and there is no hint of any divine revelation which brings him into direct communication with his Maker. His free-will is thus a portion of a fixed plan of which he can have no conception, and the following of instinct is a blind obedience to an incomprehensible fate.

Although Pope was of one mind with Bolingbroke upon this point, he was not wholly guided by his master. He was still nominally a Romanist; and, although his belief in the Christian revelation had given place to the fashionable deism of his day, he still retained the faith in a future state of happiness which Bolingbroke, following the logical consequence of his virtual denial of anything but the mere existence of a Deity, had abandoned. Pope's scheme of natural religion gave great importance to the fact that man, alone of created beings, enjoys the hope of a future life. Hope is instinctive with him: to hope therefore is to follow nature, the guide of man to God. As it provides the prospect of future bliss, hope becomes man's chief incentive to virtuous conduct. It constantly leads man upward, until its promises offer themselves to him as certainties, and hope becomes refined into faith. This is the one point at which Pope's reasoning seems to touch Christianity. He himself obviously was alarmed at the effect which the poem might have upon his more orthodox friends; and this was one reason which may have prompted his concealment of the authorship of

the earlier books. He discussed the anonymous author in letters to his Romanist friend Caryll; pointing out expressions in the poem which might be misunderstood, and attempting to shew that the context could be harmonised with the tenets of Christianity. Thus he endeavoured to anticipate the objections which his older friends might advance against the general drift of the argument. It need hardly be said that, if certain passages can be construed into a general conformity with the Christian system of ethics, the poem, on the other hand, contains no mention or hint of the fundamental dogma of Christianity, the union in its Founder of the divine and human natures. Pope indeed wrote and meditated the inclusion of an address to our Lord in the general manner of Lucretius' address to his own master, Epicurus: this design, however, was prevented by the advice of Berkeley, and its execution would, one imagines, have caused more pain than pleasure to those whom it was intended to appease.

Pope's efforts to commend his poem to all parties were attended with the usual fate of such compromises. In 1737 its principles were attacked from the orthodox side by Jean-Pierre de Crousaz, a Swiss philosopher who lived at Lausanne, in an *Examen de l'essai de Mr Pope*, which he followed up in 1738 by a longer *Commentaire sur les principes de moralité de Mr Pope*. These were translated into English, the first in 1738 by Elizabeth Carter, the second by Samuel Johnson in 1742. They shewed that Pope's system involved, as has been already noted, a mere fatalistic conception of the universe, and was utterly at variance with the

Christian scheme. Pope, however, in his alarm at an impeachment which he had hoped to avoid, was unexpectedly helped by an ally who possessed the natural gift for controversy in a high degree. William Warburton, rector of Brant Broughton, near Newark, had in 1737 obtained celebrity by the publication of the first part of his *Divine Legation of Moses*; and his appointment in 1738 as chaplain to the prince of Wales united his interests to those of the political party to which Bolingbroke and Pope adhered. It was at any rate in 1738 that he appeared as a champion of the *Essay on Man*, the principles of which he had previously denounced to his brother clergy. His commentary on the poem, defending its Christianity, was published in a series of letters, beginning in 1738, and reaching their complete form in 1742. Its arguments were special pleadings on behalf of those passages which are most ambiguous, and rested notably upon Pope's treatment of reason in the second epistle, a passage of which almost any meaning can be made, and upon his identification of hope with faith in the fourth. Warburton himself confessed that he found the fourth epistle as difficult to defend as the arguments of Crousaz and the blunders of Miss Carter's translation were easy to confute and expose. Pope accepted his help with anxious gratitude. The poem was revised with Warburton's advice, and appeared in 1743 in its present form, accompanied by Warburton's essay as a guarantee of its orthodoxy. This change of front alienated Bolingbroke from Pope, and turned the 'guide, philosopher, and friend' into a contemptuous

enemy; but it is to the skilful counsel of Warburton and his fuller training in logical arrangement that we owe the final form of the *Moral Essays* as a whole. The stanzas called *The Universal Prayer*, which now follow the *Essay on Man* in complete editions of Pope's works, were written in 1738, when Warburton was beginning to defend Pope. In them Pope strove to reconcile his expressed belief in the unalterable scheme of nature with the complete freedom of the human will, and to give human instinct the dignity of conscience.

Enough has been said to shew that Pope's equipment for a philosophical poem was slender, and that, from this point of view, he did little more than versify ideas which, with their logical consequences, he either did not perfectly apprehend or adopted too lightly to have any interest in maintaining them. But this fact, which would seriously damage the work of an inferior poet, is of less importance to the *Essay on Man* than to the character of its author. The poem itself is a remarkable example of the triumph of poetical form and style over matter. Bolingbroke used the language of sound criticism when he distinguished between the functions of the philosopher and those of the poet who embodies philosophy in his verse. The poet 'must contract, he may shadow, he has a right to omit whatever will not be cast in the poetic mould, and when he cannot instruct he may hope to please. In short, it seems to me, that the business of the philosopher is to dilate, to press, to prove, to convince, and that of the poet to hint, to touch his subject with short and spirited strokes, to warm the affections, and to speak to the

heart.' This distinction Pope thoroughly understood. On the one hand, his borrowed morality has little intrinsic value, his use of terms is loose, and his reasoning is at times too confused to be even specious. On the other, his manner of expressing himself is marked by a choice of words, a turn of phrase, and a general eloquence which go far to hide the defects of his subject-matter. The characteristic merits of his poem are somewhat in keeping with his inverted notion that nature grafts virtues upon our vices. His train of thought, imperfectly followed and not seldom involving itself in contradiction, is the occasion of passages which move upon a consistent level of dignified rhetoric and of epigrams which are justly among the most famous poetical common-places in our language. It is for the sake of these that we still read the poem: without them it would be of interest merely to the historian who uses literature only in so far as it illustrates the thought and culture of a special period.

The *Essay on Man* belongs to a time in Pope's life when his poetical practice had become fixed and was producing its most splendid results. It is the principal achievement of that 'correctness' of which the English couplet is the characteristic embodiment. An age which revolted against the formalism of eighteenth-century verse, and clothed the ever-changing shapes of its liberal fancy in an endless variety of beautiful forms, denied to Pope and his contemporaries the highest gifts of poetry, or indeed the title of poets. Pope's verse, it is true, moves within the limits of a form which, used with less imagination, can bear a close

relation to prose. The couplet, as he used it, was the outcome of a revulsion of feeling against the extravagant fancies and tortured forms in which the poets of the age preceding the Commonwealth and Restoration had indulged. It became the chosen vehicle of natural and direct expression in an age which was largely concerned with things as they are, with the arrangement and classification upon a matter-of-fact basis of the things of life, after a period of intellectual and political disturbance. Dryden, whose verse was never wholly freed from the influence of the older school of poets, gave the couplet a vigour and fulness, which Pope, nearly seventy years his junior, refined and perfected into a conciseness and elegance which left room for no further improvement. With Pope correctness meant the avoidance of extremes of fancy and the pursuit of the natural instinct which teaches man good taste and the fitness of things. It is obvious that such a course, while it is precluded by its nature from emulating the high career of an exceptional genius such as that of Milton, is equally averse from the bathos of mere prose. An essential feature of Pope's correctness is his careful use of language, his choice of diction and his development of a style, all eminently suited to give his readers that imaginative pleasure which it is the chief business of poetry to supply—to satisfy their sense of beauty and to quicken their intelligence at one and the same time. The sustained eloquence of the *Essay on Man*, accompanied by an almost unfailing choice of the fit phrase, not only produces the delight which is inseparable from the result of finished

workmanship, but makes a definite claim upon the intellect. This it could never do, were its poetry nothing more than metrical prose, however carefully the words might be strung together. In that case, the weakness of the arguments and the occasional triteness of thought would demand the first place, to the exclusion of all beauties. But Pope was able to kindle his verse into life with that poetic fire, the highest of literary gifts, which enabled him to rise above the inherent faults of his chosen subject, and to dignify them with a multitude of those memorable phrases in which the poet gives permanent shape to the most universal varieties of experience.

The style of the poem often errs upon the side of conciseness. So much matter is crowded into a couplet or a succession of couplets that connecting particles are omitted, words are left to the understanding, and the construction becomes so elliptic that not merely is the sense obscure, but the grammar here and there is faulty. Pope wrote with his habitual desire to make a point and clinch his couplet with a striking epigram; and his aim naturally gave his style a closeness of texture throughout, which demands constant watchfulness and attention to every word. In no other poet is the failure of the reader to note emphasis so fatal to the point of a sentence. The interdependence of the two lines of a couplet, with two contrasted subjects in one balanced by their objects in the other; the continual use of demonstratives to avoid repetition and to knit the threads of a prolonged contrast or comparison more tightly together, the continual inversions of the

normal order of sentences, are among the points which call for the reader's sustained vigilance.

In one respect the *Essay on Man* is somewhat different from the special type of poetry which is associated with Pope. His habitual method of clothing his theme with contemporary allusions is much less prominent than usual, and, with the exception of the mention of Newton in ep. ii, ll. 31—4, is practically absent until we come to the fourth epistle. Even then, it is used only in a few passages; and the famous lines in which the career of Marlborough served him as an example of the vanity of human greatness contain no overt reference to the real object of his satire. The familiar comparisons and similes in which he indulged when imitating the 'gaieties' of Horace were inappropriate to the 'grave march of Lucretius,' and such humble beings as the 'pamper'd goose' of ep. iii, l. 46, fill their place in the poem uneasily. In Pope's manuscript, however, his favourite allusions were introduced more freely than in the printed poem. Thus in ep. iii, after l. 108, the instinctive architecture of insects and birds was contrasted with the skill of well-known architects:

Boast we of arts? a bee can better hit
The squares than Gibbs, the bearings than Sir Kit.
To poise his dome a martin has the knack,
While bold Bernini lets St Peter's crack.

The passage in which Falkland, Turenne, Sidney and Robert Digby are cited as examples of untimely death originally omitted Turenne, and coupled with the others the names of several of Pope's personal friends who

had died early or suffered the loss of children. Such passages were eventually either expunged or altered to a form in which they were more in keeping with the rest of the poem. In the earlier epistles, this may have helped to preserve the secret of Pope's anonymity; and in the last he allowed himself rather less restraint—e.g. in his gibe at Lord Umbra and Sir Billy. The general character of the style, however, is sedulously adapted to the dignity of the subject, and anything that might be censured justly as false taste or bathos, save in a very few doubtful cases, is avoided. If Pope, face to face with the deepest of subjects, cannot claim to have touched the height of poetic endeavour, if his exhortation

‘Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life and sense,
In one close system of benevolence’

sounds harsh and formal beside Tennyson's

‘For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God’—

if his

‘chain of love
Combining all below and all above’

is a less exalted conception than the Love

‘That moves the sun in heaven and all the stars’

of Dante, it is perhaps the fault of his age and of the particular type of thought which appealed most closely, if not profoundly enough, to his mind.

In the present edition of the poem the notes are intended to deal chiefly with the meaning of passages and allusions, and the discussion of words and citation

of parallel passages has been avoided as far as possible. A multitude of parallel passages, chiefly noted by Gilbert Wakefield and Warton, will be found in the notes to Mr Elwin's text of the poem, in the monumental edition of Pope began by him and completed by Mr Courthope. A further wealth of citation was collected by Mark Pattison in the notes to the Clarendon Press edition of the poem. Both these editions have been constantly before the present editor in his work, as well as Sir Adolphus Ward's 'Globe' edition of Pope, and he has recorded his obligations to them in the notes. The text of the poem is in the main founded upon that of the early complete editions of Pope's works, and the punctuation has as far as possible been retained.

ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

EPISTLE I

1—16. Address to Bolingbroke, declaring the purpose of the poem. Its aim in tracing the connected plan of human nature, in exploring its heights and depths and observing man's foibles and manners with mingled amusement and fairness, is to demonstrate God's justice and impartiality to man.

17—34. Man's powers of reasoning with regard to the relations between God and man are limited by his knowledge of his actual station in a world which is only one of many. It may be possible for the philosopher, who has discovered the gradations of the solar system, to give a reason for man's place in the universe. But it is impossible for the soul of man to grasp the mysteries of that whole of which it is an insignificant part. God, not man, upholds the chain of being in which man is a link.

35—76. If man presumes to ask the reason of his insignificance, he may well attempt to solve the harder question, why he is not even more insignificant than he is. Why are oaks superior to weeds? Why is Jupiter greater than his satellites? Assuming that infinite Wisdom is the summit of a series of duly graded systems, each necessarily perfect in itself, it follows that man must occupy a place in this scale, and it only remains to ask whether God has placed him in a wrong position. (35—50.)

What, humanly speaking, is wrong, is right when considered in relation to the whole. Human effort is insufficient to its

ends: God at once effects His purpose, and at the same moment makes it subservient to some other. Thus, in the general scheme of things, man may be subordinate to some unknown end, of which we, with our partial vision, can have no idea. He may expect to understand this possible use which he serves, as soon as a horse or ox can understand why man makes so various a use of their powers. (51—68.)

Complaints of the imperfection of man and the injustice of Heaven are in this light fruitless. Man is as perfect as he ought to be, under the limitations which his state and place prescribe. If there is ultimate perfection in a future life, our present limitations are of no account, but every man, past or present, is in this life equally blest. (69—76.)

77—112. Heaven conceals the future from each one of its creatures, and this ignorance of all but the present alone makes life tolerable. Thus the lamb, doomed to die, knows nothing of its fate and enjoys itself to the last. In this way Heaven enables each being to fill its present state, and it is Heaven alone which, extending its care to its smallest creatures, sees the true relation of things with impartiality. Our duty with regard to the future is to hope, to wait for the revelation which death will bring, and to adore God. He hides from us the nature of future happiness, but gives us hope for the future as our present mode of blessedness. Blessedness in this life consists, not in present contentment, but in the eternal renewal of hope, the expectation of future blessedness. The soul, restless and imprisoned here, looks for rest and freedom in the life hereafter. Thus the Indian, with his low scale of intelligence, looks forward to a future existence in a world which his imagination paints as a replica of this, peopled by his earthly pleasures made perfect, and without his present inconveniences.

113—130. Man, assuming himself to be wiser than the Indian, may use his personal feelings as a scale in which to counterbalance the dispensations of Providence by private judgment, and make that judgment the final test of earthly imperfection. Using the lower creatures as instruments of his own pleasure, he may yet complain that Heaven is unjust

in allowing him to be unhappy, and may usurp God's place by putting his own justice in the place of God's and proclaiming that man ought to be the sole care of Heaven. This error arises from pride: pride is the cause which moves creatures of one order in the chain of being to trespass upon the limits of the order above them; and such an effort to transgress order is a sin against the Eternal Cause.

131—172. Pride assumes that the universe and the earth were created solely for the benefit of man, and, summing up its claims in the conclusion that earth is its footstool and the skies its canopy, encroaches upon the divine prerogative. But, if natural laws are thus subservient to man, how are we to account for exceptions, plagues, storms and earthquakes by which man is destroyed wholesale? This may be met by the argument that the laws imposed by God on Nature are of a general kind to which the exceptions are few, that Nature is liable to change, and that nothing is created perfect. Man, however, is equally imperfect: moral laws are as subject to exception as the laws of Nature. If happiness is man's chief end, he must expect moral and natural laws to follow the same course. It is useless to explain away plagues and earthquakes as slight imperfections in a general design, and at the same time to stand aghast before monstrous transgressions of the moral law. Men who are the scourges of humanity may correspond in the moral world to plagues and earthquakes in the natural. Pride can make no distinction: we reason right if we accept facts as they are. It might be better for us if we lived in a world of natural and moral calm, without tempests and without passions; but Nature and man are subject to the same general order, and their life is founded on the strife of the elements and passions.

173—206. Man, in his discontent, wishes that he possessed, not merely the qualities of beings above him, but of those below him as well, where they seem to be an advantage. But, if he assumes that all creatures are made for his use, where would that use be, if he had all their powers? Nature has given each creature suitable organs and powers in proportion to its

state: each has some quality to compensate for its apparent wants, and each is happy in its own condition. If this is so, is Heaven unkind to man, and to man alone? Is he alone, whom we call a rational being, to be discontented with everything, because he has not everything for himself? His real happiness, if pride could only recognise it, is to be content with his state of man, and to look for and think of nothing beyond. He does not need minute faculties of sight such as belong to the fly: he is not a fly, but a man. Give him keener senses, and what would be the use of the increased sensitiveness to pain which would be their consequence? If his ears were suddenly opened to the music of the spheres, it would be more than he could bear, and he would wish again for the more gentle sounds which were proportioned to his state as man. Providence, in what it gives and what it refuses to man as to other creatures, is all-good and all-wise.

207—232. A development of the theory of the chain of being already advanced. The scale of sense and thought ascends throughout creation from the lowest being to the highest, from the insect to man. In the lower animals, a gradation of each of the senses may be observed which varies from mere instinct to something which is hard to distinguish from human reason. There are points at which the sagacity of animals, a matter of memory in the first instance, assumes the character of reflection, and their natures take an intermediate quality, separated from reason by a thin, but insuperable barrier. This gradation is the necessary circumstance of the subordination of one kind of animal to another, and of all to man, whose reason may be said to comprehend the powers of the inferior beings.

233—258. The chain of being, thus graded, extends above man to the Infinite, below man to nothing. The pride of man, endeavouring to encroach upon higher powers, has as its possible consequence a similar endeavour on the part of lower beings. As creation is complete, the upward movement of one or more orders, unless attended by an uniform movement of all beings, must break a link in the chain and leave

a void in creation. One order, moving out of place, however small, is sufficient to destroy the chain. Each is essential in its proper place to the whole: therefore the disturbance of one puts all out of gear. If earth moved out of its orbit, the solar system would be wrecked: if the orders of angels left their proper spheres, there would be anarchy in heaven. It follows that the pride of man, in his comparative insignificance, is a mad and impious attempt to destroy the settled order of created things.

259—280. The absurdity of aspiring to an order beyond one's own is analogous to that of which one part of the human body would be guilty if it trespassed on the functions of another. Each being in its own order is subject to God as the Mind of all. Nature is the body, God the soul of the universe, of which each order is a part. God lives, moves, extends and works through everything, perfect in the smallest as in the greatest object, in the highest as in the lowest being. To Him each link in the chain of being is of equal importance: He fills, bounds, connects, and is equal to all.

281—294. Man therefore must not complain that the order of things is imperfect: in that order his happiness consists. He must realise his place in the world with its necessary limitations, and submit, knowing that, whatever his place may be in the scheme of things, his bliss in that must be proportioned to his capacities, and that he is safe in the guardianship of Heaven. All, unknown to him, is guided by the hand of God: what is discord to him is harmony which he cannot understand: the evil which overtakes individuals here and there is the good of the universe. In spite of the extravagances of pride and reason, we come to one conclusion, Whatever is, is right.

EPISTLE II

1—52. The moral to which our reasoning has led us is that self-knowledge is necessary: the study of mankind is not the designs of God, but man himself, in his doubtful

But this irresistible power is not wholly evil, for what is best in human nature is grafted upon it. Virtue, without human frailty to give it substance, would be too refined for human use. Thus nature, working through the passions, produces the highest virtues, which spring from qualities that are at first sight opposed to them. Bravery and enthusiasm may be the fruit of anger, love of lust, emulation of envy: pride and shame are the roots of almost all the best qualities. With our vices, then, nature gives us closely allied virtues; and the power of distinguishing between the two, and giving a good direction to evil, belongs to reason, 'the God within the mind.' (175—204.)

Thus man is compounded of vices and virtues, intermingled and blent with each other, like lights and shadows in a picture. The difficulty of distinction gives occasion to a theory that there is no such thing as virtue or vice. But they are positive qualities, as there are a positive black and white; the danger lies in mistaking the two. (205—216.)

Vice, hideous in itself, becomes only too easily tolerable and even acceptable. Its degrees are hard to define: no vicious man but thinks that others are worse than himself, so thoroughly is he acclimatised to his own degree. As a matter of fact, every man has a certain degree of vice and virtue, and even the best men can condescend to their worse part. Self-love directs our changing course, at times to partial virtue, at times to partial vice. (217—236.)

Heaven, on the other hand, has one constant end in view, which counteracts these partial workings of the human soul. Out of human frailties Heaven produces blessings, and human imperfections are the foundation of human joy, peace and glory. It is weakness and the need of dependence that are the fundamental elements of social life, in which one class of man relies upon another for support. Thus our social pleasures come into being, and the defect which is their cause, aided by reason, teaches us to welcome death when the time comes. (237—260.)

Whatever be our ruling passion, each of us is content with

it and has no wish to be anybody else. Self-esteem helps each man to this contentment, and hope leads him to look forward to further attainment of his desire. Pleased with small things in the beginning, man finds a pleasure suited to his several ages from birth to death. His private judgment gilds his delusions for him: hope makes up for the lack of present happiness: self-esteem fills up what is wanting in the gratification of passion; and all three counteract the disillusionment which comes of knowledge. Thus man lives in a state of constant expectation. In all his vanities there is a hidden purpose: his own self-love, mean though it is, teaches him, from his own wants, to value those of his fellows. Man, pleased by unsubstantial follies, is himself a fool; but in compensation, God, who rules all these things for His eternal purpose, is wise. (261--294.)

EPISTLE III

1—78. The truth that the Universal Cause has one end in view, but uses various means for its attainment, must be present with man as a constant check upon superfluous pride. All beings in the chain of existence are connected by natural affection. Inorganic atoms combine by mutual attraction to form organic matter. Matter, brought into life, pursues its existence for the general good: the life of one thing originates in the death of another. Thus every part of creation belongs to a great whole, which is filled with a single Soul that holds all together in mutual dependence. Man cannot argue that his is the sole good which God considers: the creatures subordinate to him each enjoy their own happiness and share man's advantages with him. A goose might just as well argue that the man who feeds him is made for his use, as man that all things were made for himself. It is true that man holds the lower creatures in subjection, but his tyranny is restrained by nature. He is the only being who has the quality of helping and providing for beings beneath himself. His self-interest, pleasure and pride combine to prompt him to give an asylum

to birds, beasts and fish. The creatures whom he destroys to gratify his pleasures are preserved carefully by him to the last moment. They enjoy themselves up to the death which they do not feel; and man himself must meet death, when his feast of life is over. While they have no prescience of their end, man, the only thinking being, is endued with knowledge of death; but Heaven gives him hope with this knowledge, so that the gradual approach of death is less keenly felt by him.

79—108. All creatures, whether they enjoy the blessing of instinct or reason, are provided with the power that suits them best: this is their way to happiness, in the course of which they find means adapted to their end. Natural instinct by itself is an unerring guide: it does not wait, like reason, till it is called, and then disappoints those who need it, but comes of its own accord and hits the mark accurately. Reason may labour to achieve happiness: instinct achieves it at once. Instinct is a permanent and trustworthy, reason a temporary and uncertain principle. Reason, the comparing, and instinct, the impelling power, though in human nature they are two opposite principles, are actually one in essence, i.e. the one puts the other into action. God, working through natural instinct, moves man to use his reason: reason therefore can never be given a higher place than instinct. The power of instinct in animals, birds and insects is proof of God's immediate operation through this principle.

109—146. While God gives each being its own happiness within certain limits, He also provides a collective end of happiness for the whole creation. This end rests upon mutual wants. One natural instinct pervades creation, linking like to like. The self-love of every creature extends itself to a similar creature of the other sex, and is again renewed in love of offspring. In beasts and birds this mutual tie ceases when the young become old enough to take care of themselves. In man the young need longer care: the original instinct is strengthened and preserved by reflection and reason. The love of a human mate is thus attended by choice and sympathy:

human passions give birth to virtues: mutual wants increase and habit forms new ties which produce benevolence or social love from mere natural affection. In the older generations the primary instinct becomes habitual, and watches over the development of that instinct in the younger, so that the interests of parents and offspring are united and the species preserved by bonds of pleasure, gratitude and hope.

147—198. Going back to the beginning of things, man in a state of nature was not guided merely by a blind instinct. The state of nature was the reign of God. Self-love and the social love which unites all things existed from the first. Man lived in simplicity, sharing the life of the beasts, living on vegetable food in the open air. He worshipped under the vault of heaven without sacrifice. Heaven cared for all, and man's prerogative was to rule, but spare the lower creatures. In this his descendants, who slay and eat the beasts, have deteriorated; and, in compensation for their war upon the beasts, they have turned to destroy each other.

As man progressed to the acquirement of arts, his reason at first followed the dictates of natural instinct. Nature told him to copy the lower beings, to seek his food where the birds found theirs, to learn from the beasts the value of grass as a natural remedy, to learn the art of building from the bee, of ploughing from the mole, of weaving from the worm, of sailing from the nautilus. His reason was taught by nature to draw conclusions from the social union and commonwealths of the ants and bees, and to mark their invariable laws. Nature, warning him that his own reason could merely complicate and entangle the governing principles of such commonwealths, left him to follow the promptings of reason, to subdue the lower creatures by his superior intelligence, and to win kingship or be deified for discovering arts by reason, to which instinct was actually a sufficient guide.

199—214. Thus man, obeying nature, built cities and formed communities. States arose and were united by love or fear, by war or commerce. At first, while liberty consisted in mutual affection, and law was the dictate of nature, peaceful

means prevailed. Gradually, the common interest of states led them to place their rule in the hands of a single person or prince, who was chosen for virtues identical with those of the father of a family. The first princes were the fathers of their people.

215—318. The paternal authority of the patriarch, king, priest and parent of his state, was a matter of natural instinct. His subjects revered him and his skill in the arts as divine. His death led them to mourn him as merely mortal; and then, tracing back his origin from father to father, they eventually found in God the first Father of all. Or, on the other hand, the knowledge of God may have been a tradition of a First Cause handed down from father to son. They recognised God as distinct from His work, and simple reason never imagined more than one God. During this period, before intelligence had confused his simple views, man still looked on things from the point of view of his Maker, and saw that all was good: he sought virtue by means of his pleasures, and confessed the fatherhood of God. His faith and loyalty were his love, for natural instinct acknowledged no divine right inherent in man: it feared nothing from God and recognised nothing but good in a sovereign Being. Faith was love of God, policy love of man, and both were harmoniously combined. (215—240.)

But, as time went on, the father of his people developed into the tyrant with divine right, who treated the people as made for his own benefit. From force came conquest: conquest was established by law: superstition, implanting fear first in the tyrant, imparted fear to the people, and became a powerful aid to tyranny, converting conquerors into gods, subjects into slaves. Superstition taught man to be afraid of God in the convulsions of nature, and produced the idea of a lower world, the offspring of fear, and a heaven, the offspring of hope. Her gods were invested with the attributes of tyrants. Zeal, spite and pride took the place of natural affection. Man built himself covered temples and marble altars. Sacrifices of beasts and men took the place of simple worship: the priest arrogated divine attributes to himself, and used his pretended

power over the elements as an engine against his enemies. (241—268.)

Thus we see self-love working through the ruling passion to the supremacy of a single man. At the same time, self-love finds it necessary to provide restraints on his power, in order that each individual may not pursue an unbridled course to the tyranny which it is one man's interest to maintain for himself. If the tyrant is to be safe from competitors, his liberty must be qualified: the ambition of his rivals will consent to the preservation of those laws without which tyranny, their own object, would be impossible. The instinct of self-preservation forced kings to follow a course of virtue: they learned that justice and benevolence were the surest safeguards of their throne; and so self-love was brought to identify the public good with its private interest. (269—282.)

At this point the functions of the poet and patriot began to operate in society and lead man back to the light of nature, which was burning dim. Such disinterested persons restored some true idea of God to men, and revived a proper notion of the use of power to harmonise and temper the discordant interests of the state. In this harmony of jarring interests consists the order of the world and the union of strength with weakness. Mutual need makes one man powerful in proportion as others have need of him: his own happiness is contingent upon the happiness which he gives to others; and thus every order of beings is united by a common end, and all meet at one central point. (283—302.)

Fools may argue for one particular form of government in which special interests are consulted: zealots may argue on behalf of a form of faith which meets their own prejudice. But the best government is that which is administered for the good of all: the faith cannot be wrong which is joined to a disinterested conduct. Faith and hope are matters of opinion: charity, the love of mankind, is the concern of everyone. Opinion which does harm to charity must be false: that which serves to promote or restore human happiness must be of God. (303—310.)

To sum up, man lives by dependence ; his strength depends on mutual reliance. As each planet moves on its own axis, and is yet part of the solar system, so the soul shares two principles, self-love and social love, of which the first relates to the soul alone, while the other relates to the common frame of which the soul is a part. The identified operation of these principles is the result of the working of God through the medium of natural instinct. (311—318.)

EPISTLE IV

1—48. Happiness is the end and aim of all men, the object of hope, the motive of life. The fool neglects it : the wise man sees it double in its relation to virtue. Born in heaven, it can be found everywhere upon earth, by the courtier, the rich man, the poet, the warrior. Our failure to find it is our own fault. Learned men have endeavoured to fix an exclusive definition upon it ; but all the efforts of the schools of philosophy end in the conclusion that happiness is happiness. If we leave arguing about it to follow nature, happiness is within the range of all : its true means are thinking right and meaning well, and the ease of all is achieved by general common sense. For true happiness consists in the good, not of individuals, but of all. No man actually pursues any form of happiness without considering what other people will think of him : his motives are love of admiration or desire of friendship. This is the general law by which the Universal Cause acts : take away the thought of others from man's search after happiness, and, while others are thus defrauded of their share, the pleasure of the individual is destroyed.

49—76. In obedience to the law of order, there are various degrees of earthly greatness, riches and wisdom. But these are not degrees of happiness. In happiness, all are equal. The general happiness, the peace of nature, is caused by the right adjustment of mutual wants, irrespective of rank or circumstances. If all were equal in externals, the gifts of Fortune, there would be a general strife for pre-eminence.

The fortunate may be called happy, but with their happiness Heaven has mingled fear; while those who from a worldly point of view are unhappy have the compensation of hope. Happiness lies in the future, not in the present good or ill; and strivings after perfect happiness in this life are as vain as the war of the giants upon the gods.

77—96. All earthly happiness is comprised in health, peace and competence, and to health temperance, to peace virtue, are necessary. The bad man, using evil means to obtain the gifts of fortune, fails to enjoy them. Virtue is essential to the right enjoyment of fortune: its absence is fatal to the happiness of the vicious man. To prefer vice to virtue is to be blind to God's whole scheme of happiness, which only those who walk in the paths of virtue can hope to fulfil.

97—130. The good are foolishly called unhappy, because they are liable to accidents. Good men, despising life, have died prematurely in battle; but this cannot be charged upon their virtue. Other examples shew that happiness and virtue are quite independent of length or shortness of life. God does not send ill: physical ill is due to aberrations of nature, moral to the errors of the human will. The ill of the individual is either part of a general scheme of good, or is a matter of chance or suffered by nature. Man is the author of his own ills, and we have no cause to complain of Heaven or expect God to alter His laws in favour of philosophers or men of special virtue. The good and bad alike are subject to natural laws.

131—148. But suppose that this world can be improved in favour of the good, and concede that the just man should have the right to pre-eminence instead of the fortunate knave. Who is to decide who the just are? While human opinion differs, the man who seems to his own followers all that is good will be abhorred by his opponents: what seems to the one party a mark of God's special favour will be to the other an argument against God's very existence. Even in the case of the best men one man's virtue is rewarded at the expense of another's. We can only acknowledge that whatever is, is right, and that the world is made for the good and bad alike.

149—308. It is argued that vice prospers, while virtue starves. But prosperity is not the end of virtue: a knave may deserve what he gets by hard work, while the good man, aiming at content, may do no work at all. Suppose, however, that he has the blessing of riches, is this enough for the objector? No: he ought to have health, power, even unbounded power and kingship. Why, then, is not man God and earth Heaven? Such demands are far more than God gives on earth; they stop nowhere. (149—166.)

Virtue's real prize is contentment, not earthly honour. Heaven's future rewards are not founded on worldly ambition. As we grow older in this life, we put away childish things: in the same way heavenly rewards belong to a state of the soul which will have no relish for the toys of children or the pleasures of later life. Earthly glory either brings no joy to virtue or destroys it. Only the good man can feel content with riches or the unmarketable blessings of esteem and love; and God has no share in the human estimate of a man's happiness by his income. (167—192.)

Rank has nothing to do with honour and shame: our honour depends upon playing our part in life well. The difference between the king and the monk, the parson and the cobbler, is a matter of externals: the real test of the man is his wisdom and worth. Any man can gain worldly distinctions by flattering kings and their mistresses. Rank, on the other hand, may depend on a long line of ancestors. But worth alone is to be valued in a pedigree: the most ancient blood cannot ennoble the worthless. (193—216.)

Again, greatness is popularly supposed to be the prerogative of heroes and the wise. But heroes pursue a mad and short-sighted career of war upon mankind. Wise politicians are wise at the expense of others' weakness. In proportion as their means are worse, they are more foolish and wicked. True greatness depends upon the use of virtuous means, whether with success or failure. (217—236.)

Fame consists simply in one's own consciousness of the praise of others. It depends upon the weapon which we use,

the poet's pen, the marshal's truncheon. Honest worth, on the other hand, irrespective of fame, is the noblest work of God. All true fame springs from worth: it is measured by self-approval, and the exile for conscience' sake feels more true joy than the conqueror amid the applause of the people whom he has enslaved. (238—258.)

Superior genius is simply, from a man's own point of view, a consciousness of ignorance. His own superiority, which teaches him to see others' faults, isolates him. The patriot works without the sympathy he needs and without any criterion which would help him, and rests in a painful pre-eminence, envied and disliked, aloof from human weakness and earthly comforts. (259—268.)

Is it worth while, then, to build happiness on these externals and to risk everything for them? Contemporary and historical examples teach us to scorn them one and all. The worldly scale of happiness is false. The career of a conqueror, pursuing ambition from small beginnings, a hero at the expense of his manhood, wealthy upon the ruins of conquered nations, ending ignominiously in the earthly palace which he has built, teaches us to see that such fame is a mere shadow. Its noontide glory is to be measured by the shame of its beginning and its end. (269—308.)

309—352. All that man need know is the truth that Virtue alone is happiness below. In all those points in which the mere gifts of fortune are wanting, virtue is sufficient. It is true contentment without satiety, capable of unwearied exercise, free from extremes of emotion, ready to give itself to him who wishes for it. The bad man, endowed with fortune and learning, is poor in that he misses it: the good finds it by instinct. He follows nature through the chain of being up to God, keeping clear of private prejudice: he apprehends the links in the chain; and so learns that love of God and love of man, the point from which the human soul began its being, are the objects of its journey through the world. (309—340.)

The happiness of virtue is fulfilled by that hope of eternal bliss which the good man, its only possessor, adds to his faith.

Hope and faith are necessary complements to each other, implanted in man by nature as an instinctive gift, akin to the instinct by which she leads other creatures to seek and inevitably to find. In this respect, nature gives a powerful incentive to virtue: future bliss is at once the end and stimulates the means to its attainment. (341—352.)

353—372. Thus self-love produces love of others, and so leads to love of God. The happiness of man is the happiness of his neighbours: that of his enemies will be included in it, and so the whole world will be united in one system of universal love, in which the height of happiness will be the height of charity. Self-love, rousing the virtuous mind to action, extends its circle to the whole universe, as a stone dropped into water moves the centre of the surface, and produces round it a number of increasing and widening circles. In the universe united by benevolence Heaven beholds its own image.

373—398. Commendation of the work to Bolingbroke, with a summary of its main conclusions. Pride is confuted by the proof that whatever is, is right: reason and passion are identical in aim: self-love and social love are one and the same thing: virtue is our only happiness on earth; and all human knowledge is knowledge of self.

AN ESSAY ON MAN

TO

H. ST JOHN, LORD BOLINGBROKE

THE DESIGN

HAVING proposed to write some pieces on Human Life and Manners, such as (to use my lord Bacon's expression) *come home to Men's Business and Bosoms*, I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering Man in the abstract, his Nature and his State; since, to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.

The science of Human Nature is, like all other sciences, reduced to a few clear points: there are not many certain truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind as in that of the body; more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels, the conformations and uses of which will for ever escape our observation. The disputes are all upon these last, and, I will venture to say, they have less sharpened the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and have diminished the practice, more

subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to Man. The gradations of sense, instinct, thought, reflection, reason; that reason alone countervails all the other faculties, ver. 207. VIII. How much further this order and subordination of living creatures may extend, above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation must be destroyed, ver. 233. IX. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire, ver. 250. X. The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state, ver. 281, &c., to the end.

EPISTLE I

AWAKE, my St John! leave all meaner things
 To low ambition, and the pride of kings.
 Let us (since life can little more supply
 Than just to look about us, and to die)
 Expatiate free o'er all this scene of Man; 5
 A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
 A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot:
 Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
 Together let us beat this ample field,
 Try what the open, what the covert yield; 10
 The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
 Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;
 Eye Nature's walks, shoot Folly as it flies,
 And catch the Manners living as they rise;
 Laugh where we must, be candid where we can; 15
 But vindicate the ways of God to Man.

I. Say first, of God above, or Man below,
 What can we reason, but from what we know?
 Of Man, what see we but his station here,

From which to reason, or to which refer? 20

Thro' worlds unnumber'd tho' the God be known,

'Tis ours to trace Him only in our own.

He, who through vast immensity can pierce,

See worlds on worlds compose one universe,

Observe how system into system runs, 25

What other planets circle other suns,

What vary'd being peoples every star,

May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.

But of this frame the bearings and the ties,

The strong connections, nice dependencies, 30

Gradations just, has thy pervading soul

Look'd thro'? or can a part contain the whole?

Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,

And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?

II. Presumptuous Man! the reason wouldst thou find,

Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind? 36

First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,

Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less?

Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made

Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade; 40

Or ask of yonder argent fields above,

Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove?

Of systems possible, if 'tis confest

That Wisdom infinite must form the best,

Where all must full or not coherent be, 45

And all that rises, rise in due degree;

Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 'tis plain,

There must be, somewhere, such a rank as Man:

And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)

Is only this, if God has placed him wrong? 50

Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
 May, must be right, as relative to all.
 In human works, tho' labour'd on with pain,
 A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;
 In God's, one single can its end produce; 55
 Yet serves to second too some other use.
 So Man, who here seems principal alone,
 Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
 Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;
 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

When the proud steed shall know why man re-
 strains
 His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;
 When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
 Is now a victim, and now Ægypt's god:
 Then shall Man's pride and dulness comprehend 65
 His actions', passions', being's, use and end;
 Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd; and why
 This hour a slave, the next a deity.

Then say not Man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault;
 Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought: 70
 His knowledge measur'd to his state and place;
 His time a moment, and a point his space.
 If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
 What matter, soon or late, or here, or there?
 The blest to-day is as completely so, 75
 As who began a thousand years ago.

III. Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of
 Fate,
 All but the page prescrib'd, their present state:
 From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:

Or who could suffer being here below? 80
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.
Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n, 85
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n:
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world. 90

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher Death; and God adore.
What future bliss, He gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast: 95
Man never Is, but always To be blest:
The soul, uneasy, and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind; 100
His soul, proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd, 105
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire; 110

But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV. Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense,
Weigh thy opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such, 115
Say, here He gives too little, there too much:
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
Yet cry, If Man's unhappy, God's unjust;
If Man alone ingross not Heav'n's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there: 120
Snatch from His hand the balance and the rod,
Re-judge His justice, be the God of God.
In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes, 125
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel:
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of Order, sins against th' Eternal Cause. 130

V. Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "'Tis for mine:
For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r;
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew 135
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies." 140

But errs not Nature from this gracious end,

From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?

“No, ('tis reply'd) the first Almighty Cause 145

Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;

Th' exceptions few; some change since all began:

And what created perfect?"—Why then Man?

If the great end be human Happiness,

Then Nature deviates; and can Man do less? 150

As much that end a constant course requires

Of show'rs and sunshine, as of Man's desires;

As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,

As men for ever temperate, calm, and wise.

If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,

Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline? 156

Who knows but He, whose hand the lightning forms,

Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms;

Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,

Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind? 160

From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs;

Account for moral as for nat'ral things:

Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit?

In both, to reason right is to submit.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear, 165

Were there all harmony, all virtue here;

That never air or ocean felt the wind,

That never passion discompos'd the mind.

But all subsists by elemental strife;

And passions are the elements of life. 170

The gen'ral Order, since the whole began,

Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

VI. What would this Man? Now upward will he
 soar,

And little less than angel, would be more;
 Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears 175
 To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
 Made for his use all creatures if he call,
 Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all?
 Nature to these, without profusion, kind,
 The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd; 180
 Each seeming want compensated of course,
 Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;
 All in exact proportion to the state;
 Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
 Each beast, each insect, happy in its own: 185
 Is Heav'n unkind to Man, and Man alone?
 Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
 Be pleas'd with nothing, if not blest with all?

The bliss of Man (could pride that blessing find)
 Is not to act or think beyond mankind; 190
 No pow'rs of body, or of soul to share,
 But what his nature and his state can bear.
 Why has not Man a microscopic eye?
 For this plain reason, Man is not a fly.
 Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n, 195
 T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?
 Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
 To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore?
 Or quick effluvia, darting through the brain,
 Die of a rose in aromatic pain? 200
 If Nature thundered in his op'ning ears,
 And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,

How would he wish that Heav'n had left him
still

The whisp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill?
Who finds not Providence all good and wise, 205
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

VII. Far as Creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends:
Mark how it mounts to Man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass; 210
What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:
Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood, 215
To that which warbles through the vernal wood!
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
From poisonous herbs extracts the healing dew: 220
How instinct varies in the grov'ling swine,
Compared, half-reas'ning elephant, with thine!
'Twixt that, and reason, what a nice barrier!
For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near!
Remembrance and reflection how ally'd; 225
What thin partitions sense from thought divide!
And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass th' insuperable line!
Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee? 230
The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,
Is not thy reason all these pow'rs in one?

VIII. See, thro' this air, this ocean, and this earth,
 All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
 Above, how high, progressive life may go! 235
 Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
 Vast chain of being! which from God began,
 Natures æthereal, human, angel, man,
 Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
 No glass can reach; from Infinite to thee, 240
 From thee to nothing.—On superior pow'rs
 Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
 Or in the full creation leave a void,
 Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd:
 From Nature's chain whatever link you strike, 245
 Tenth, or ten thousandth breaks the chain alike.

And, if each system in gradation roll
 Alike essential to th' amazing Whole,
 The least confusion but in one, not all
 That system only, but the whole must fall. 250
 Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
 Planets and suns run lawless thro' the sky;
 Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
 Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
 Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod, 255
 And Nature tremble to the throne of God.
 All this dread Order break—for whom? for thee?
 Vile worm!—oh madness! pride! impiety!

IX. What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
 Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head? 260
 What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd
 To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
 Just as absurd for any part to claim

To be another, in this gen'ral frame;
Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains 265
The great directing Mind of all ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous Whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That, chang'd through all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in th' æthereal frame; 270
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow's in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part, 275
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
To Him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all. 280

X. Cease then, nor Order imperfection name:
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: this kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.
Submit.—In this, or any other sphere, 285
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
Safe in the hand of one disposing Pow'r,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see; 290
All discord, harmony not understood:
All partial evil, universal good.
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.

ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE II

Of the Nature and State of Man with respect to Himself, as an Individual

I. The business of Man not to pry into God, but to study himself. His middle nature; his powers and frailties, ver. 1 to 19. The limits of his capacity, ver. 19, &c. II. The two principles of Man, Self-love and Reason, both necessary, ver. 53, &c. Self-love the stronger, and why, ver. 67, &c. Their end the same, ver. 81, &c. III. The Passions, and their use, ver. 93 to 130. The predominant Passion, and its force, ver. 132 to 160. Its necessity, in directing men to different purposes, ver. 165, &c. Its providential use, in fixing our principle, and ascertaining our virtue, ver. 177. IV. Virtue and vice joined in our mixed nature; the limits near, yet the things separate and evident: What is the office of Reason, ver. 202 to 216. V. How odious vice in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it, ver. 217. VI. That, however, the ends of Providence and general Good are answered in our passions and imperfections, ver. 238, &c. How usefully these are distributed to all orders of men, ver. 241. How useful they are to society, ver. 251. And to individuals, ver. 263. In every state, and every age of life, ver. 273, &c.

EPISTLE II

I. KNOW then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is Man.
Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side, 5

With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,
 He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
 In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;
 In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
 Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err; 10
 Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
 Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
 Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;
 Still by himself abus'd or disabus'd;
 Created half to rise, and half to fall; 15
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

Go, wond'rous creature! mount where Science guides,
 Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides; 20
 Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,
 Correct old Time, and regulate the sun;
 Go, soar with Plato to th' empyreal sphere,
 To the first good, first perfect, and first fair;
 Or tread the mazy round his follow'rs trod, 25
 And quitting sense call imitating God;
 As Eastern priests in giddy circles run,
 And turn their heads to imitate the sun.
 Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule—
 Then drop into thyself, and be a fool! 30

Superior beings, when of late they saw
 A mortal man unfold all Nature's law,
 Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,
 And shew'd a Newton as we shew an ape.

Could he, whose rules the rapid comet bind, 35
 Describe or fix one movement of his mind?

Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,
 Explain his own beginning, or his end?
 Alas, what wonder! Man's superior part
 Uncheck'd may rise, and climb from art to art; 40
 But when his own great work is but begun,
 What Reason weaves, by Passion is undone.

Trace Science, then, with modesty thy guide;
 First strip off all her equipage of pride;
 Deduct what is but vanity or dress, 45
 Or learning's luxury, or idleness;
 Or tricks to shew the stretch of human brain,
 Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain;
 Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent parts
 Of all our vices have created arts; 50
 Then see how little the remaining sum,
 Which serv'd the past, and must the times to come!

II. Two principles in human nature reign;
 Self-love, to urge, and Reason, to restrain;
 Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call, 55
 Each works its end, to move or govern all:
 And to their proper operation still,
 Ascribe all good, to their improper, ill.

Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;
 Reason's comparing balance rules the whole. 60
 Man, but for that, no action could attend,
 And, but for this, were active to no end:
 Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar spot.
 To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot:
 Or, meteor-like, flame lawless thro' the void, 65
 Destroying others, by himself destroy'd.

Most strength the moving principle requires;

Active its task, it prompts, impels, inspires.
Sedate and quiet the comparing lies,
Form'd but to check, delib'rate, and advise. 70
Self-love, still stronger, as its objects nigh;
Reason's at distance, and in prospect lie:
That sees immediate good by present sense;
Reason, the future and the consequence.
Thicker than arguments, temptations throng. 75
At best more watchful this, but that more strong.
The action of the stronger to suspend,
Reason still use, to Reason still attend.
Attention, habit and experience gains;
Each strengthens Reason, and Self-love restrains. 80

Let subtle schoolmen teach these friends to fight,
More studious to divide than to unite;
And grace and virtue, sense and reason split,
With all the rash dexterity of wit.
Wits, just like fools, at war about a name, 85
Have full as oft no meaning, or the same.
Self-love and Reason to one end aspire,
Pain their aversion, pleasure their desire;
But greedy that, its object would devour,
This taste the honey, and not wound the flow'r: 90
Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,
Our greatest evil, or our greatest good.

III. Modes of Self-love the passions we may call;
'Tis real good, or seeming, moves them all:
But since not ev'ry good we can divide, 95
And Reason bids us for our own provide:
Passions, tho' selfish, if their means be fair,
List under Reason, and deserve her care;

Those, that imparted, court a nobler aim,
Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name. 100

In lazy apathy let stoics boast
Their virtue fix'd; 'tis fix'd as in a frost;
Contracted all, retiring to the breast;
But strength of mind is exercise, not rest:
The rising tempest puts in act the soul, 105
Parts it may ravage, but preserves the whole.
On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,
Reason the card, but Passion is the gale;
Nor God alone in the still calm we find,
He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind. 110

Passions, like elements, tho' born to fight,
Yet, mix'd and soften'd, in His work unite:
These, 'tis enough to temper and employ;
But what composes Man, can Man destroy?
Suffice that Reason keep to Nature's road, 115
Subject, compound them, follow her and God.
Love, hope, and joy, fair pleasure's smiling train,
Hate, fear, and grief, the family of pain,
These mixt with art, and to due bounds confin'd,
Make and maintain the balance of the mind: 120
The lights and shades, whose well-accorded strife
Gives all the strength and colour of our life.

Pleasures are ever in our hands or eyes;
And when, in act, they cease, in prospect, rise:
Present to grasp, and future still to find, 125
The whole employ of body and of mind.
All spread their charms, but charm not all alike;
On diff'rent senses, diff'rent objects strike;
Hence diff'rent passions more or less inflame,

As strong or weak, the organs of the frame; 130
And hence one Master Passion in the breast,
Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.

As Man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,
Receives the lurking principle of death;
The young disease, that must subdue at length, 135
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength:
So, cast and mingled with his very frame,
The mind's disease, its Ruling Passion came;
Each vital humour which should feed the whole,
Soon flows to this, in body and in soul: 140
Whatever warms the heart, or fills the head,
As the mind opens, and its functions spread,
Imagination plies her dang'rous art,
And pours it all upon the peccant part.

Nature its mother, Habit is its nurse; 145
Wit, spirit, faculties, but make it worse;
Reason itself but gives it edge and pow'r;
As Heav'n's blest beam turns vinegar more sour.

We, wretched subjects tho' to lawful sway,
In this weak queen, some fav'rite still obey: 150
Ah! if she lend not arms, as well as rules,
What can she more than tell us we are fools;
Teach us to mourn our nature, not to mend,
A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend!
Or from a judge turn pleader, to persuade 155
The choice we make, or justify it made?
Proud of an easy conquest all along,
She but removes weak passions for the strong:
So, when small humours gather to a gout,
The doctor fancies he has driv'n them out. 160

Yes, Nature's road must ever be prefer'd;
 Reason is herè no guide, but still a guard;
 'Tis hers to rectify, not overthrow,
 And treat this passion more as friend than foe;
 A mightier Pow'r the strong direction sends, 165
 And sev'ral men impels to sev'ral ends:
 Like varying winds, by other passions tost,
 This drives them constant to a certain coast.
 Let pow'r or knowledge, gold or glory, please,
 Or (oft more strong than all) the love of ease; 170
 Thro' life 'tis follow'd, ev'n at life's expence;
 The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence,
 The monk's humility, the hero's pride,
 All, all alike, find Reason on their side.

Th' Eternal Art, educing good from ill, 175
 Grafts on this passion our best principle:
 'Tis thus the mercury of Man is fix'd,
 Strong grows the virtue with his nature mix'd;
 The dross cements what else were too refin'd,
 And in one int'rest body acts with mind. 180

As fruits, ungrateful to the planter's care,
 On savage stocks inserted learn to bear;
 The surest virtues thus from passions shoot,
 Wild Nature's vigour working at the root.
 What crops of wit and honesty appear 185
 From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear!
 See anger, zeal and fortitude supply;
 Ev'n av'rice, prudence; sloth, philosophy;
 Lust, thro' some certain strainers well refin'd,
 Is gentle love, and charms all womankind; 190
 Envy, to which th' ignoble mind's a slave,

Is emulation in the learn'd or brave;
Nor virtue, male or female, can we name,
But what will grow on pride, or grow on shame.

Thus Nature gives us (let it check our pride) 195
The virtue nearest to our vice ally'd:
Reason the byas turns to good from ill,
And Nero reigns a Titus, if he will.
The fiery soul abhor'd in Catiline,
In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine: 200
The same ambition can destroy or save,
And makes a patriot as it makes a knave.

This light and darkness in our chaos join'd,
What shall divide? The God within the mind.

Extremes in Nature equal ends produce, 205
In man they join to some mysterious use;
Tho' each by turns the other's bound invade,
As, in some well-wrought picture, light and shade,
And oft so mix, the diff'rence is too nice
Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice. 210

Fools! who from hence into the notion fall,
That vice or virtue there is none at all.
If white and black blend, soften, and unite
A thousand ways, is there no black or white?
Ask your own heart, and nothing is so plain; 215
'Tis to mistake them, costs the time and pain.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace. 220
But where th' extreme of vice, was ne'er agreed:
Ask where's the north? at York, 'tis on the Tweed;

In Scotland, at the Orcades; and there,
 At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.
 No creature owns it in the first degree, 225
 But thinks his neighbour farther gone than he:
 Ev'n those who dwell beneath its very zone,
 Or never feel the rage, or never own;
 What happier nations shrink at with affright,
 The hard inhabitant contends is right. 230

Virtuous and vicious ev'ry man must be,
 Few in th' extreme, but all in the degree;
 The rogue and fool by fits is fair and wise;
 And even the best, by fits, what they despise.
 'Tis but by parts we follow good or ill; 235
 For, vice or virtue, Self directs it still;
 Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal;
 But Heav'n's great view, is one, and that the whole.
 That counter-works each folly and caprice;
 That disappoints th' effect of every vice; 240
 That, happy frailties to all ranks apply'd:
 Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride,
 Fear to the statesman, rashness to the chief,
 To kings presumption, and to crowds belief:
 That, virtue's ends from vanity can raise, 245
 Which seeks no int'rest, no reward but praise;
 And build on wants, and on defects of mind,
 The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind.

Heav'n forming each on other to depend,
 A master or a servant, or a friend, 250
 Bids each on other for assistance call,
 Till one man's weakness grows the strength of
 all.

Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
 The common int'rest, or endear the tie.
 To these we owe true friendship, love sincere, 255
 Each home-felt joy that life inherits here;
 Yet from the same we learn, in its decline,
 Those joys, those loves, those int'rests to resign;
 Taught half by reason, half by mere decay,
 To welcome death, and calmly pass away. 260

Whate'er the passion, knowledge, fame, or pelf,
 Not one will change his neighbour with himself.
 The learn'd is happy nature to explore,
 The fool is happy that he knows no more;
 The rich is happy in the plenty giv'n, 265
 The poor contents him with the care of Heav'n.
 See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,
 The sot a hero, lunatic a king;
 The starving chemist in his golden views
 Supremely blest, the poet in his muse. 270

See some strange comfort ev'ry state attend,
 And pride bestow'd on all, a common friend:
 See some fit passion ev'ry age supply,
 Hope travels thro', nor quits us when we die.

Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law, 275
 Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw:
 Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,
 A little louder, but as empty quite:
 Scarves, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,
 And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age: 280
 Pleas'd with this bauble still, as that before;
 Till tir'd he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.

Mean-while Opinion gilds with varying rays

Those painted clouds that beautify our days;
 Each want of happiness by hope supply'd, 285
 And each vacuity of sense by pride:
 These build as fast as knowledge can destroy;
 In folly's cup still laughs the bubble, joy;
 One prospect lost, another still we gain;
 And not a vanity is giv'n in vain; 290
 Ev'n mean Self-love becomes, by force divine,
 The scale to measure others' wants by thine.
 See! and confess, one comfort still must rise,
 'Tis this, tho' man's a fool, yet God is wise.

ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE III

Of the Nature and State of Man with respect to Society

I. The whole Universe one system of society, ver. 7, &c. Nothing made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for another, ver. 27. The happiness of animals mutual, ver. 49. II. Reason or Instinct operate alike to the good of each individual, ver. 79. Reason or Instinct operate also to society, in all animals, ver. 109. III. How far society carried by Instinct, ver. 115. How much farther by Reason, ver. 128. IV. Of that which is called the state of nature, ver. 144. Reason instructed by Instinct in the invention of arts, ver. 166, and in the forms of society, ver. 176. V. Origin of political societies, ver. 196. Origin of monarchy, ver. 207. Patriarchal government, ver. 212. VI. Origin of true religion and government, from the same principle, of Love, ver. 231, &c. Origin of superstition and tyranny, from the same principle, of Fear, ver. 237, &c. The influence of Self-love operating to the social and public good, ver. 266. Restoration of true religion and government on their first principle, ver. 285. Mixt government, ver. 288. Various forms of each, and the true end of all, ver. 300, &c.

EPISTLE III

HERE then we rest: "The Universal Cause
Acts to one end, but acts by various laws."
In all the madness of superfluous health,
The trim of pride, the impudence of wealth,
Let this great truth be present night and day; 5
But most be present, if we preach or pray.

I. Look round our world; behold the chain of Love
Combining all below and all above.

See plastic Nature working to this end,
The single atoms each to other tend, 10

Attract, attracted to, the next in place
Form'd and impell'd its neighbour to embrace.

See matter next, with various life endued,
Press to one centre still, the gen'ral good.

See dying vegetables life sustain, 15
See life dissolving vegetate again:

All forms that perish other forms supply
(By turns we catch the vital breath, and die),

Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne
They rise, they break, and to that sea return. 20

Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole;

One all-extending, all-preserving Soul

Connects each being, greatest with the least;

Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast;
All serv'd, all serving: nothing stands alone; 25

The chain holds on, and where it ends, unknown.

Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for thy good,
Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?

Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,

For him as kindly spread the flow'ry lawn: 30
Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.
Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?
Loves of his own and raptures swell the note.
The bounding steed you pompously bestride, 35
Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride.
Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain?
The birds of heav'n shall vindicate their grain.
Thine the full harvest of the golden year?
Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer: 40
The hog, that plows not, nor obeys thy call,
Lives on the labours of this lord of all.

Know, Nature's children all divide her care;
The fur that warms a monarch, warm'd a bear.
While Man exclaims, "See all things for my use!" 45
"See man for mine!" replies a pamper'd goose:
And just as short of reason he must fall,
Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.

Grant that the pow'ful still the weak controul;
Be Man the wit and tyrant of the whole: 50
Nature that tyrant checks; he only knows,
And helps, another creature's wants and woes.
Say, will the falcon, stooping from above,
Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove?
Admires the jay the insect's gilded wings? 55
Or hears the hawk when Philomela sings?
Man cares for all: to birds he gives his woods,
To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods;
For some his int'rest prompts him to provide,
For more his pleasure, yet for more his pride: 60

All feed on one vain patron, and enjoy
Th' extensive blessing of his luxury.
That very life his learned hunger craves,
He saves from famine, from the savage saves;
Nay, feasts the animal he dooms his feast, 65
And, till he ends the being, makes it blest:
Which sees no more the stroke, or feels the pain,
Than favour'd man by touch æthereal slain.
The creature had his feast of life before;
Thou too must perish, when thy feast is o'er! 70
To each unthinking being, Heav'n, a friend,
Gives not the useless knowledge of its end:
To Man imparts it; but with such a view
As, while he dreads it, makes him hope it too;
The hour conceal'd, and so remote the fear, 75
Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.
Great standing miracle! that Heav'n assign'd
Its only thinking thing this turn of mind.

II. Whether with Reason, or with Instinct blest,
Know, all enjoy that pow'r which suits them best; 80
To bliss alike by that direction tend,
And find the means proportion'd to their end.
Say, where full Instinct is th' unerring guide,
What pope or council can they need beside?
Reason, however able, cool at best, 85
Cares not for service, or but serves when prest,
Stays till we call, and then not often near;
But honest Instinct comes a volunteer,
Sure never to o'er-shoot, but just to hit;
While still too wide or short is human wit; 90
Sure by quick Nature happiness to gain,

Which heavier Reason labours at in vain.
 This too serves always, Reason never long;
 One must go right, the other may go wrong.
 See then the acting and comparing pow'rs 95
 One in their nature, which are two in ours!
 And Reason raise o'er Instinct as you can,
 In this 'tis God directs, in that 'tis Man.

Who taught the nations of the field and wood
 To shun their poison, and to chuse their food? 100
 Prescient, the tides or tempests to withstand,
 Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand?
 Who made the spider parallels design,
 Sure as De Moivre, without rule or line?
 Who bid the stork, Columbus-like, explore 105
 Heav'ns not his own, and worlds unknown before?
 Who calls the council, states the certain day,
 Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?

III. God, in the nature of each being, founds
 Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds: 110
 But as He framed a whole, the whole to bless,
 On mutual wants built mutual happiness:
 So from the first, eternal Order ran,
 And creature link'd to creature, man to man.
 Whate'er of life all-quick'ning æther keeps, 115
 Or breathes thro' air, or shoots beneath the deeps,
 Or pours profuse on earth, one nature feeds
 The vital flame, and swells the genial seeds.
 Not man alone, but all that roam the wood,
 Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood, 120
 Each loves itself, but not itself alone,
 Each sex desires alike, till two are one.

Nor ends the pleasure with the fierce embrace;
They love themselves, a third time, in their race.
Thus beast and bird their common charge attend, 125
The mothers nurse it, and the sires defend;
The young dismiss'd to wander earth or air,
There stops the instinct, and there ends the care;
The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace,
Another love succeeds, another race. 130
A longer care Man's helpless kind demands;
That longer care contracts more lasting bands:
Reflection, Reason, still the ties improve,
At once extend the int'rest and the love:
With choice we fix, with sympathy we burn; 135
Each virtue in each passion takes its turn;
And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise,
That graft benevolence on charities.
Still as one brood, and as another rose,
These nat'ral love maintained, habitual those: 140
The last, scarce ripen'd into perfect man,
Saw helpless him from whom their life began:
Mem'ry and forecast just returns engage,
That pointed back to youth, this on to age;
While pleasure, gratitude, and hope, combin'd, 145
Still spread the int'rest and preserv'd the kind.

IV. Nor think, in Nature's state they blindly trod;
The state of Nature was the reign of God:
Self-love and social at her birth began,
Union the bond of all things, and of Man. 150
Pride then was not; nor arts, that pride to aid;
Man walk'd with beast, joint tenant of the shade;
The same his table, and the same his bed;

No murder cloath'd him, and no murder fed.
In the same temple, the resounding wood, 155
All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God:
The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest,
Unbrib'd, unbloody, stood the blameless priest:
Heav'n's attribute was universal care,
And Man's prerogative, to rule, but spare. 160
Ah! how unlike the man of times to come!
Of half that live the butcher and the tomb;
Who, foe to Nature, hears the gen'ral groan,
Murders their species, and betrays his own.
But just disease to luxury succeeds, 165
And ev'ry death its own avenger breeds;
The fury-passions from that blood began,
And turned on Man, a fiercer savage, Man.

See him from Nature rising slow to art!
To copy Instinct then was Reason's part; 170
Thus then to Man the voice of Nature spake—
"Go, from the creatures thy instructions take:
Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;
Learn from the beasts the physic of the field;
Thy arts of building from the bee receive; 175
Learn of the mole to plough, the worm to weave;
Learn of the little nautilus to sail,
Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.
Here too all forms of social union find,
And hence let Reason, late, instruct mankind: 180
Here subterranean works and cities see;
There towns aërial on the waving tree.
Learn each small people's genius, policies,
The ant's republic, and the realm of bees;

How those in common all their wealth bestow, 185
 And anarchy without confusion know;
 And these for ever, tho' a monarch reign,
 Their sep'rate cells and properties maintain.
 Mark what unvary'd laws preserve each state,
 Laws wise as Nature, and as fixed as Fate. 190
 In vain thy Reason finer webs shall draw,
 Entangle Justice in her net of law,
 And right, too rigid, harden into wrong;
 Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.
 Yet go! and thus o'er all the creatures sway, 195
 Thus let the wiser make the rest obey:
 And for those arts mere Instinct could afford,
 Be crown'd as monarchs, or as gods ador'd."

V. Great Nature spoke; observant Man obey'd;
 Cities were built, societies were made: 200
 Here rose one little state; another near
 Grew by like means, and join'd, thro' love or fear.
 Did here the trees with ruddier burdens bend,
 And there the streams in purer rills descend?
 What war could ravish, commerce could bestow, 205
 And he return'd a friend, who came a foe.
 Converse and Love mankind might strongly draw,
 When Love was liberty, and Nature law.
 Thus States were form'd; the name of king unknown,
 Till common int'rest plac'd the sway in one. 210
 'Twas virtue only (or in arts or arms,
 Diffusing blessings, or averting harms)
 The same which in a sire the sons obey'd,
 A prince the father of a people made.

VI. Till then, by Nature crown'd, each patriarch sate,

King, priest, and parent, of his growing state; 216
On him, their second Providence, they hung,
Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.
He from the wond'ring furrow call'd the food,
Taught to command the fire, controul the flood, 220
Draw forth the monsters of th' abyss profound,
Or fetch th' aëreal eagle to the ground.
Till drooping, sick'ning, dying they began
Whom they rever'd as God to mourn as Man:
Then, looking up from sire to sire, explor'd 225
One great first Father, and that first ador'd.
Or plain tradition that this All begun,
Convey'd unbroken faith from sire to son;
The worker from the work distinct was known,
And simple Reason never sought but one: 230
Ere wit oblique had broke that stedd' light,
Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right;
To virtue, in the paths of pleasure, trod,
And own'd a Father when he own'd a God.
Love all the faith, and all th' allegiance then; 235
For Nature knew no right divine in men,
No ill could fear in God; and understood
A sov'reign being, but a sov'reign good.
True faith, true policy, united ran,
That was but love of God, and this of Man. 240
Who first taught souls enslav'd, and realms undone,
Th' enormous faith of many made for one;
That proud exception to all Nature's laws,
T' invert the world, and counter-work its Cause?
Force first made conquest, and that conquest, law; 245
Till Superstition taught the tyrant awe,

Then shar'd the tyranny, then lent it aid,
 And gods of conqu'rors, slaves of subjects made:
 She 'midst the light'ning's blaze, and thunder's sound,
 When rock'd the mountains, and when groan'd the
 ground, 250

She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray,
 To Pow'r unseen, and mightier far than they:
 She, from the rending earth, and bursting skies,
 Saw gods descend, and fiends infernal rise:
 Here fix'd the dreadful, there the blest abodes: 255
 Fear made her devils, and weak hope her gods;
 Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
 Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust;
 Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,
 And, form'd like tyrants, tyrants would believe. 260
 Zeal then, not charity, became the guide;
 And hell was built on spite, and heav'n on pride.
 Then sacred seemed th' æthereal vault no more;
 Altars grew marble then, and reek'd with gore:
 Then first the flamen tasted living food; 265
 Next his grim idol smear'd with human blood;
 With heav'n's own thunders shook the world below,
 And play'd the god an engine on his foe.

So drives Self-love, thro' just and thro' unjust,
 To one man's pow'r, ambition, lucre, lust: 270
 The same Self-love, in all, becomes the cause
 Of what restrains him, government and laws.
 For, what one likes, if others like as well,
 What serves one will, when many wills rebel?
 How shall he keep, what, sleeping or awake, 275
 A weaker may surprise, a stronger take?

His safety must his liberty restrain :
 All join to guard what each desires to gain.
 Forc'd into virtue thus, by self-defence,
 Ev'n kings learn'd justice and benevolence : 280
 Self-love forsook the path it first pursu'd,
 And found the private in the public good.

'Twas then the studious head or gen'rous mind,
 Follow'r of God, or friend of human kind,
 Poet or patriot, rose but to restore 285
 The faith and moral, Nature gave before ;
 Re-lum'd her ancient light, not kindled new ;
 If not God's image, yet His shadow drew :
 Taught pow'r's due use to people and to kings,
 Taught nor to slack, nor strain its tender strings, 290
 The less, or greater, set so justly true,
 That touching one must strike the other too ;
 Till jarring interests, of themselves create
 Th' according music of a well-mix'd state:
 Such is the world's great harmony, that springs 295
 From order, union, full consent of things :
 Where small and great, where weak and mighty, made
 To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade ;
 More pow'rful each as needful to the rest,
 And, in proportion as it blesses, blest ; 300
 Draw to one point, and to one centre bring
 Beast, man, or angel, servant, lord, or king.

For forms of government let fools contest ;
 Whate'er is best administer'd is best :
 For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight ; 305
 His can't be wrong whose life is in the right ;
 In faith and hope the world will disagree,

But all mankind's concern is charity:
 All must be false that thwart this one great end;
 And all of God, that bless mankind or mend. 310
 Man, like the gen'rous vine, supported lives:
 The strength he gains is from th' embrace he gives.
 On their own axis as the planets run,
 Yet make at once their circle round the sun;
 So two consistent motions act the Soul; 315
 And one regards itself, and one the whole.
 Thus God and Nature link'd the gen'ral frame,
 And bade Self-love and social be the same.

ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE IV

Of the Nature and State of Man with respect to Happiness

I. False Notions of Happiness, philosophical and popular, answered from ver. 19 to 77. II. It is the end of all men, and attainable by all, ver. 30. God intends Happiness to be equal; and to be so, it must be social, since all particular Happiness depends on general, and since He governs by general, not particular laws, ver. 37. As it is necessary for order, and the peace and welfare of society, that external goods should be unequal, Happiness is not made to consist in these, ver. 51. But, notwithstanding that inequality, the balance of Happiness among mankind is kept even by Providence, by the two passions of Hope and Fear, ver. 70. III. What the Happiness of individuals is, as far as is consistent with the constitution of this world; and that the good man has here the advantage, ver. 77. The error of imputing to Virtue what are only the calamities of Nature, or of Fortune, ver. 94. IV. The folly of expecting that God should alter His general laws in favour of particulars, ver. 121. V. That we are not judges who are good; but that, whoever they are, they must be happiest, ver. 133, &c.

VI. That external goods are not the proper rewards, but often inconsistent with, or destructive of Virtue, ver. 165. That even these can make no man happy without Virtue: instanced in Riches, ver. 183. Honours, ver. 191. Nobility, ver. 203. Greatness, ver. 215. Fame, ver. 235. Superior Talents, ver. 257, &c. With pictures of human infelicity in men possessed of them all, ver. 267, &c. VII. That Virtue only constitutes a Happiness, whose object is universal, and whose prospect eternal, ver. 307, &c. That the perfection of Virtue and Happiness consists in a conformity to the Order of Providence here, and a resignation to it here and hereafter, ver. 326, &c.

EPISTLE IV

OH Happiness! our being's end and aim!
 Good, pleasure, ease, content! whate'er thy name:
 That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
 For which we bear to live, or dare to die,
 Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies, 5
 O'erlook'd, seen double, by the fool and wise.
 Plant of celestial seed! if dropt below,
 Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow?
 Fair op'ning to some court's propitious shine,
 Or deep with di'monds in the flaming mine? 10
 Twin'd with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,
 Or reap'd in iron harvests of the field?
 Where grows?—where grows it not? If vain our toil,
 We ought to blame the culture, not the soil:
 Fix'd to no spot is Happiness sincere, 15
 'Tis nowhere to be found, or ev'rywhere;
 'Tis never to be bought, but always free,
 And fled from monarchs, St John! dwells with thee.
 Ask of the learn'd the way? The learn'd are blind;

This bids to serve, and that to shun mankind; 20
 Some place the bliss in action, some in ease,
 Those call it pleasure, and contentment these;
 Some sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in pain;
 Some swell'd to gods, confess ev'n Virtue vain;
 Or indolent, to each extreme they fall, 25
 To trust in ev'rything, or doubt of all.

Who thus define it, say they more or less
 Than this, that Happiness is Happiness?

Take Nature's path, and mad Opinion's leave;
 All states can reach it, and all heads conceive; 30
 Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell;
 There needs but thinking right, and meaning well;
 And mourn our various portions as we please,
 Equal is common sense, and common ease.

Remember, Man, "the Universal Cause 35
 Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws";
 And makes what Happiness we justly call
 Subsist not in the good of one, but all.
 There's not a blessing individuals find,
 But some way leans and hearkens to the kind: 40
 No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,
 No cavern'd hermit, rests self-satisfy'd:
 Who most to shun or hate mankind pretend,
 Seek an admirer, or would fix a friend:
 Abstract what others feel, what others think, 45
 All pleasures sicken, and all glories sink:
 Each has his share; and who would more obtain,
 Shall find, the pleasure pays not half the pain.

Order is Heav'n's first law; and this confest,
 Some are, and must be, greater than the rest, 50

More rich, more wise; but who infers from hence
 That such are happier, shocks all common sense.
 Heav'n to mankind impartial we confess,
 If all are equal in their Happiness:

But mutual wants this Happiness increase; 55

All Nature's diff'rence keeps all Nature's peace.

Condition, circumstance is not the thing;

Bliss is the same in subject or in king,

In who obtain defence, or who defend,

In him who is, or him who finds a friend: 60

Heav'n breathes thro' ev'ry member of the whole

One common blessing, as one common soul.

But Fortune's gifts if each alike possest,

And each were equal, must not all contest?

If then to all men Happiness was meant, 65

God in externals could not place content.

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,

And these be happy call'd, unhappy those;

But Heav'n's just balance equal will appear,

While those are plac'd in Hope, and these in Fear: 70

Nor present good or ill, the joy or curse,

But future views of better, or of worse.

Oh sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise,

By mountains pil'd on mountains, to the skies,

Heav'n still with laughter the vain toil surveys, 75

And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

Know, all the good that individuals find,

Or God and Nature meant to mere mankind,

Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,

Lie in three words, health, peace, and competence. 80

But health consists with temperance alone;

And peace, oh Virtue! peace is all thy own.
The good or bad the gifts of Fortune gain;
But these less taste them, as they worse obtain.
Say, in pursuit of profit or delight, 85
Who risk the most, that take wrong means, or right?
Of Vice or Virtue, whether blest or curst,
Which meets contempt, or which compassion first?
Count all th' advantage prosperous Vice attains,
'Tis but what Virtue flies from and disdains: 90
And grant the bad what happiness they would,
One they must want, which is, to pass for good.

Oh blind to truth, and God's whole scheme below,
Who fancy bliss to Vice, to Virtue woe!
Who sees and follows that great scheme the best, 95
Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest.
But fools the good alone unhappy call,
For ills or accidents that chance to all.
See Falkland dies, the virtuous and the just!
See god-like Turenne prostrate on the dust! 100
See Sidney bleeds amid the martial strife!
Was this their Virtue, or contempt of life?
Say, was it Virtue, more tho' Heav'n ne'er gave,
Lamented Digby! sunk thee to the grave?
Tell me, if Virtue made the son expire, 105
Why, full of days and honour, lives the sire?
Why drew Marseilles' good bishop purer breath,
When Nature sicken'd, and each gale was death?
Or why so long (in life if long can be)
Lent Heav'n a parent to the poor and me? 110

What makes all physical or moral ill?
There deviates Nature, and here wanders Will.

God sends not ill; if rightly understood,
 Or partial ill is universal good,
 Or change admits, or Nature lets it fall; 115
 Short, and but rare, till Man improv'd it all.
 We just as wisely might of Heav'n complain
 That righteous Abel was destroy'd by Cain,
 As that the virtuous son is ill at ease
 When his lewd father gave the dire disease. 120
 Think we, like some weak prince, th' Eternal Cause
 Prone for His fav'rites to reverse His laws?

Shall burning Ætna, if a sage requires,
 Forget to thunder, and recall her fires?
 On air or sea new motions be imprest, 125
 Oh blameless Bethel! to relieve thy breast?
 When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
 Shall gravitation cease, if you go by?
 Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,
 For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall? 130

But still this world (so fitted for the knave)
 Contents us not. A better shall we have?
 A kingdom of the just then let it be:
 But first consider how those just agree.
 The good must merit God's peculiar care: 135
 But who, but God, can tell us who they are?
 One thinks on Calvin Heav'n's own spirit fell;
 Another deems him instrument of hell;
 If Calvin feel Heav'n's blessing, or its rod.
 This cries there is, and that, there is no God. 140
 What shocks one part will edify the rest,
 Nor with one system can they all be blest.
 The very best will variously incline,

And what rewards your virtue, punish mine.
 Whatever is, is right.—This world, 'tis true, 145
 Was made for Cæsar—but for Titus too;
 And which more blest? who chain'd his country, say,
 Or he whose virtue sigh'd to lose a day?

“But sometimes Virtue starves, while Vice is fed.”
 What then? Is the reward of Virtue bread? 150
 That, Vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil;
 The knave deserves it, when he tills the soil,
 The knave deserves it, when he tempts the main,
 Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.
 The good man may be weak, be indolent; 155
 Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.
 But grant him riches, your demand is o'er?
 “No—shall the good want health, the good want
 pow'r?”

Add health, and pow'r, and every earthly thing,
 “Why bounded pow'r? why private? why no king?” 160
 Nay, why external for internal giv'n?
 Why is not Man a god, and earth a heav'n?
 Who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive
 God gives enough, while He has more to give:
 Immense the pow'r, immense were the demand; 165
 Say, at what part of Nature will they stand?

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
 The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy,
 Is virtue's prize: A better would you fix?
 Then give Humility a coach and six, 170
 Justice a conqu'ror's sword, or Truth a gown,
 Or Public Spirit its great cure, a crown.
 Weak, foolish Man! will heaven reward us there

With the same trash mad mortals wish for here?
 The boy and man an individual makes, 175
 Yet sigh'st thou now for apples and for cakes?
 Go, like the Indian, in another life
 Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife;
 As well as dream such trifles are assign'd,
 As toys and empires, for a god-like mind. 180
 Rewards, that either would to Virtue bring
 No joy, or be destructive of the thing:
 How oft by these at sixty are undone
 The virtues of a saint at twenty-one!
 To whom can riches give repute, or trust, 185
 Content, or pleasure, but the good and just?
 Judges and senates have been bought for gold,
 Esteem and Love were never to be sold.
 Oh fool! to think God hates the worthy mind,
 The lover and the love of human-kind, 190
 Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,
 Because he wants a thousand pounds a year.
 Honour and shame from no condition rise;
 Act well your part, there all the honour lies.
 Fortune in men has some small diff'rence made, 195
 One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade;
 The cobbler apron'd, and the parson gown'd,
 The friar hooded, and the monarch crown'd,
 "What differ more (you cry) than crown and cowl?"
 I'll tell you, friend! a wise man and a fool. 200
 You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,
 Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,
 Worth makes the man, and want of it, the fellow;
 The rest is all but leather or prunella.

Stuck o'er with titles and hung round with strings, 205
That thou may'st be by kings, or whores of kings.
Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,
In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece:
But by your fathers' worth if your's you rate,
Count me those only who were good and great. 210
Go! if your ancient, but ignoble blood
Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood,
Go! and pretend your family is young;
Nor own, your fathers have been fools so long.
What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards? 215
Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards.

Look next on greatness; say where greatness lies?
"Where, but among the heroes and the wise?"
Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed,
From Macedonia's madman to the Swede; 220
The whole strange purpose of their lives, to find
Or make, an enemy of all mankind!
Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,
Yet ne'er looks forward farther than his nose.
No less alike the politic and wise; 225
All sly slow things, with circumspective eyes:
Men in their loose unguarded hours they take,
Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.
But grant that those can conquer, these can
cheat;
'Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great: 230
Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,
Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.
Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,

Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed 235
Like Socrates, that man is great indeed.

What's Fame? a fancy'd life in others' breath,
A thing beyond us, ev'n before our death.
Just what you hear, you have, and what's unknown
The same (my Lord) if Tully's, or your own. 240
All that we feel of it begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes or friends;
To all beside as much an empty shade
An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead;
Alike or when, or where, they shone, or shine, 245
Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine.
A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod;
An honest Man's the noblest work of God.
Fame but from death a villain's name can save,
As Justice tears his body from the grave; 250
When what t' oblivion better were resign'd,
Is hung on high, to poison half mankind.
All fame is foreign, but of true desert;
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart:
One self-approving hour whole years out-weighs 255
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas;
And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

In parts superior what advantage lies?
Tell (for you can) what is it to be wise? 260
'Tis but to know how little can be known;
To see all others' faults, and feel our own:
Condemn'd in bus'ness or in arts to drudge,
Without a second, or without a judge;
Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land, 265

All fear, none aid you, and few understand.
Painful pre-eminence! yourself to view
Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.

Bring then these blessings to a strict account;
Make fair deductions; see to what they mount: 270
How much of other each is sure to cost;
How each for other oft is wholly lost;
How inconsistent greater goods with these;
How sometimes life is risk'd, and always ease:
Think, and if still the things thy envy call, 275
Say, would'st thou be the man to whom they fall?
To sigh for ribbands if thou art so silly,
Mark how they grace Lord Umbra, or Sir Billy:
Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life?
Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife; 280
If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shin'd,
The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind:
Or ravish'd with the whistling of a name,
See Cromwell, damn'd to everlasting fame!
If all, united, thy ambition call, 285
From ancient story learn to scorn them all.
There, in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd, and great,
See the false scale of Happiness complete!
In hearts of kings, or arms of queens who lay,
How happy! those to ruin, these betray. 290
Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,
From dirt and sea-weed as proud Venice rose;
In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,
And all that rais'd the hero, sunk the man:
Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold, 295
But stain'd with blood, or ill exchange'd for gold;

Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,
 Or infamous for plunder'd provinces.
 Oh wealth ill-fated! which no act of fame
 E'er taught to shine, or sanctify'd from shame! 300
 What greater bliss attends their close of life?
 Some greedy minion, or imperious wife,
 The trophy'd arches, story'd halls invade,
 And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.
 Alas! not dazzled with their noon-tide ray, 305
 Compute the morn and ev'ning to the day;
 The whole amount of that enormous fame,
 A tale, that blends their glory with their shame!
 Know then this truth (enough for Man to know)
 "Virtue alone is Happiness below." 310
 The only point where human bliss stands still,
 And tastes the good without the fall to ill;
 Where only Merit constant pay receives,
 Is blest in what it takes, and what it gives;
 The joy unequal'd, if its end it gain, 315
 And if it lose, attended with no pain;
 Without satiety, tho' e'er so bless'd,
 And but more relish'd as the more distress'd:
 The broadest mirth unfeeling Folly wears,
 Less pleasing far than Virtue's very tears: 320
 Good, from each object, from each place acquir'd
 For ever exercis'd, yet never tir'd;
 Never elated, while one man's oppress'd;
 Never dejected, while another's bless'd;
 And where no wants, no wishes can remain, 325
 Since but to wish more Virtue, is to gain.
 See the sole bliss Heav'n could on all bestow!

Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know :
Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
The bad must miss; the good, untaught, will find; 330
Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks through Nature up to Nature's God;
Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,
Joins heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine;
Sees, that no being any bliss can know, 335
But touches some above, and some below;
Learns, from this union of the rising Whole,
The first, last purpose of the human soul;
And knows, where faith, law, morals, all began,
All end, in Love of God, and Love of Man. 340

For him alone, Hope leads from goal to goal,
And opens still, and opens on his soul;
Till lengthen'd on to Faith, and unconfin'd,
It pours the bliss that fills up all the mind.
He sees, why Nature plants in Man alone 345
Hope of known bliss, and Faith in bliss unknown:
(Nature, whose dictates to no other kind
Are giv'n in vain, but what they seek they find)
Wise is her present; she connects in this
His greatest virtue with his greatest bliss; 350
At once his own bright prospect to be blest,
And strongest motive to assist the rest.

Self-love thus push'd to social, to divine,
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine.
Is this too little for the boundless heart? 355
Extend it, let thy enemies have part:
Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life, and sense,
In one close system of benevolence:

Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
And height of bliss but height of charity. 360

God loves from whole to parts: but human soul
Must rise from individual to the whole.
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
The centre mov'd, a circle straight succeeds, 365
Another still, and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace;
His country next; and next all human race;
Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
Take ev'ry creature in, of every kind; 370
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
And Heav'n beholds its image in his breast.

Come, then, my friend! my genius! come along;
Oh master of the poet, and the song!
And while the Muse now stoops, or now ascends, 375
To Man's low passions, or their glorious ends,
Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,
To fall with dignity, with temper rise;
Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer
From grave to gay, from lively to severe; 380
Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
Intent to reason, or polite to please.
Oh! while along the stream of Time thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame;
Say, shall my little bark attendant sail, 385
Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?
When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
Shall then this verse to future age pretend

Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend? 390
 That urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art
 From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;
 From wit's false mirror held up Nature's light;
 Showed erring pride, Whatever is, is right;
 That Reason, Passion, answer one great aim; 395
 That true Self-love and social are the same;
 That Virtue only makes our bliss below;
 And all our knowledge is, Ourselves to know.

NOTES

EPISTLE I

1. 1. **St John]** Henry St John, born 1678, created viscount Bolingbroke and baron St John of Lydiard Tregoze 1712. He was a prominent member of the tory party during the reign of Anne, and was secretary of state in Harley's ministry of 1710, conducting the negotiations for the signature of the treaty of Utrecht in 1713. After the accession of George I, he was impeached and attainted for treasonable correspondence with the Pretender, with whom he took refuge in France. He was dismissed from the Pretender's councils in 1716 and lived in retirement until he received a pardon and was able to return to England in 1723. He was in England for most of the period between 1723 and 1735, when he retired permanently to France. He died in 1751. When Pope wrote the *Essay on Man*, Bolingbroke was living at Dawley near Uxbridge, and taking an active part in the journalistic warfare against Walpole and his policy.

5. **Expatiate]** Wander at large: cf. l. 98 below. The 'scene of Man' suggests various metaphors to Pope. It is a maze (l. 6), a wilderness (l. 7), a garden (l. 8): from ll. 9 to 14 it is an 'ample field' for the sportsman, and the metaphors are drawn from sporting sources.

13. **shoot Folly as it flies]** Gilbert Wakefield notes the original of this phrase in Dryden, *Aurungzebe*, act III. 'Youth should watch joys and shoot 'em as they fly,' and in (Tate's portion of) *Absalom and Achitophel*, part II. l. 1032, where Sheva (Sir Roger l'Estrange), the opponent of whig pamphleteers, 'observes, and shoots their treasons as they fly.'

15. **candid]** I.e. fair in judgment.

16. **vindicate]** A reminiscence of Milton, *Par. Lost*, i. 26, with a slight alteration. Milton's object was to 'justify the ways of God to men,' i.e. to maintain God's justice by argument. Pope's design is to clear Providence of the imputation of injustice which arises from the unequal distribution of happiness in this world.

20. **or to which refer]** I.e. or to which to refer. Pope's habitual conciseness of expression occasionally defeats its end and becomes mere brevity.

23. **He]** The allusion is probably to Sir Isaac Newton, who is directly mentioned as unfolding 'all Nature's law' in *Ep. II.* l. 32.

27. **vary'd being]** Varieties of existence.

29. **this frame]** the universe.

31. **pervading]** The sense is final, viz. has thy soul so looked through the universe that it pervades its various workings? The doctrine of the universe, as held by Pope, is expressed by Thomson, *Spring*, ll. 848—50,

Inspiring God! who, boundless Spirit all,
And unremitting Energy, pervades,
Adjusts, sustains, and agitates the whole.

33. **the great chain]** The chain of being: see l. 237 below.

41. **yonder argent fields]** The planets and stars, with their silvery light. Milton, *Par. Lost*, III. 460, had called them 'those argent fields.'

42. **satellites]** Four syllables, as in the plural of the Latin *satelles*. Johnson remarked that the *e* is usually mute in the plural: 'Pope has...continued the Latin form...I think improperly.' Pattison quotes a contemporary instance of the four-syllabled usage from J. T. Desaguliers (d. 1744).

44. **Wisdom infinite]** The 'presumptuous man' whom Pope attacks might justly argue that Pope is begging the question here. His express design is to 'vindicate the ways of God to Man,' but, if the supremacy of Wisdom infinite is admitted as an axiom, the vindication is unnecessary.

55. Clearness is again sacrificed to conciseness. In God's works, one single movement can gain its purpose.

59. 'Unknown' is understood after 'wheel' and 'goal,' from the preceding line."

64. *Ægypt's god*] The bull was worshipped at Memphis under the name of Apis, and was regarded as the living symbol of the deity Osiris.

70. *ought*] I.e. ought to be.

72. The line is an application to man of the scholastic doctrine that God's eternity is a moment, his immensity a point (Elwin).

73—6. These lines, originally placed after l. 98, were erased by Pope in 1740 and restored to their present place by Warburton. The phrase '*If to be perfect*' caused Pope some anxiety, as likely to damage him in the eyes of his orthodox friends. While the poem was still anonymous, he wrote to his fellow-Romanist Caryll, who was ignorant of the author's identity, 'Nothing is so plain, as that he [the author] quits his proper subject, this present world, to assert his belief of a future state, and yet there is an *if* instead of a *since* that would overthrow his meaning.'

87—8. Elwin points out that this couplet is at variance with the teaching of St Matth. x. 29—31, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing,' etc. Pope was probably thinking of this passage, and forgot its conclusion, 'ye are of more value than many sparrows.' Pattison, however, arguing from the manifest absurdity which follows if the next couplet is taken literally, suggests that there is a 'defect of expression' in Pope's language, and that all which he implies is the extension of the over-ruling care of Providence to the most minute details.

96. There is a superficial contradiction between the statement that man's blessedness lies, not in the present, but in the future, and the statement in ll. 75—6 that his blessedness is uniformly perfect. Pope may have recognised this when he omitted ll. 73—6 from the edition of 1740: their original position after l. 98 must have made the contradiction more apparent. The meaning, as the passages now stand, depends upon the context. In ll. 75—6 man's blessedness is referred to, independently of his own point of view: the present passage is concerned with the human view of blessedness which the hope of a future state induces.

97. *from home*] Pope originally wrote '*at home*,' doubtless

thinking of the body, the 'soul's dark cottage' (Waller, 'When we for age,' etc., l. 13). Warburton suggested the alteration, in view of the possible objection that the soul's true home is the future life.

102. **solar walk**] Dryden, *Threnodia Augustalis*, l. 352, uses the phrase, 'Out of the solar walk and Heav'n's highway.' Cf. Gray, *Progress of Poesy*, 'In climes beyond the solar road.'

110. **seraph's fire**] The word seraph = the burning one, the seraphim being the celestial beings nearest to the throne of God. Cf. l. 278 below. 'The rapt seraph that adores and burns,' and Milton, *At a Solemn Musick*, l. 10, 'the bright seraphim in burning row.' The conventional representation of a seraph in art is flame-coloured.

117. **gust**] Sensual enjoyment, literally taste (Lat. *gustus*, It. *gusto*, Fr. *goût*). While we have abandoned this use of the word, we still use its antithesis 'disgust.'

123. **pride**] Pride was regarded in medieval theology as the chief and mother of the deadly sins, being the sin which makes human reason the final measure of things. Thus, in a wall-painting in Raunds Church, Northants, Pride, a tall female figure, is represented as the centre of a group of figures emblematic of the six other deadly sins.

132. **Earth for whose use**] I.e. Ask for whose use Earth is intended.

142. Note the inversion of the two parts of the sentence. Cf. l. 177 below.

143—4. This couplet is a striking example of Pope's favourite expedient of placing two verbs side by side in one line and their objects to correspond symmetrically in the next. The first half of l. 144 is the object of the first half of l. 143, and the second halves of the lines are similarly connected. The same method of balancing the lines may be seen in ll. 11—12, 97—8, 135—6 above.

147. **some change**] 'change' is a substantive: i.e. there has been some change since all began.

156. **Borgia**] Cesare Borgia, son of pope Alexander VI. Between 1498, when he resigned his cardinalate and received the duchy of Valentinois from Louis XII of France, and 1503, he achieved the conquest of the independent principalities of Romagna by a remarkable

combination of force and fraud. His father's sudden death and his own serious illness 'in 1503 prevented him from giving permanency to his conquests. He was thrown into prison by Julius II, but escaped with the loss of his possessions into Spain, and died as a soldier of fortune at the siege of Viana in 1507. His ferocity and unscrupulousness were remarkable even in an age and country in which such qualities were common among soldiers and statesmen, but he appears to have been a better ruler than most of the princes whom he deposed, and it is more than probable that the horrible reputation of himself and his family, though not without foundation, has been much exaggerated. It is noteworthy that Machiavelli, who gives a famous and brilliant summary of his career (*Il Principe*, cap. vii), reckons him, not among princes who have conquered by criminal means, but as an example of those who have gained new principalities 'with others' forces and by fortune.' The best English estimate of his character is that given by Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, v. 73—5.

Catiline] Lucius Sergius Catilina, head of a conspiracy to murder the Roman consuls elected for the year 65 B.C. He was acquitted, and stood for the consulship in the following year, but was defeated. At the end of 63 B.C., he entered into a second conspiracy to kill Cicero, the retiring consul, and to seize Rome for himself and his party. His designs were exposed by Cicero in his famous orations against Catiline: his confederates were executed, and Catiline himself, endeavouring to retreat into Cisalpine Gaul, made a last stand against Marcus Petreius, and, when the day was lost, sought death in the heart of the battle.

160. **young Ammon]** Alexander the Great, hailed by the priests of the shrine of Ammon in Libya as the son of their god. The phrase, and possibly the juxtaposition of Caesar (l. 159) with 'young Ammon,' appear to be a reminiscence of Garth's *Dispensary*, 1699, Canto 1. l. 45.

'To how minute an origin we owe

Young Ammon, Cæsar, and the great Nassau.'

163. **those...these]** A common Latinism. Those=the former, these=the latter. The meaning is: why should we make Heaven

responsible for moral transgressions, while we acquit it from tampering with the laws of Nature?

174. **little less than angel**] Cf. l. 126 above. In the chain of being, man is immediately beneath the angels. See Psalm viii. 5.

181. **compensated**] Note the accent on the second, not on the third syllable.

185. **its own**] Supply 'state' from l. 183.

195—200. The elliptical expression obscures the grammar of the passage, the sense of which can be given only by paraphrase. 'Say what would be the use, if we were given keener sight, of the power of seeing the infinitely small without the power of comprehending heaven? What would be the use of more delicate touch, if it gave us extreme bodily sensitiveness, so that we smarted and felt agony at every pore, or of a keener sense of smell, if in its sudden passage through the brain, the scent of a rose caused pain and brought death?' The antithesis in l. 196 has no parallel in the two following couplets, and their construction actually demands a change which Pope has avoided for the sake of terseness: ll. 199, 200, however, correspond to ll. 197, 198, but the conjunctions 'if' and 'to' are omitted before 'darting' and 'die.'

202. **the music of the spheres**] According to the Pythagorean doctrine, the movement of the planets as they revolved caused each to emit a separate note, analogous to one of the eight notes of the scale and ascending by seven regular intervals from the deepest note, which was that of the moon, the planet nearest the earth. The earth itself, being supposed to be motionless, uttered no note. Cicero, *Somnium Scipionis*, cap. 5, describes this constant harmony, and compares the deafness of men, whose ears are filled with the sound, to the legendary deafness of dwellers near the cataracts of the Nile. Men, he says, can no more hear the sound with their ears than the naked eye can look directly at the sun. The expression became a commonplace with poets: the most famous and beautiful allusion is in Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, v. i. 60—5.

214. The hound finding scent is described by Somerville, *The Chase*, 1735, book i. l. 319 sqq.

'Soon the sagacious brute, his curling tail
Flourish'd in air, low bending plies around

His busy nose, the steaming vapour sniffs
Inquisitive, nor leaves one turf untried,' etc.

See note on l. 5 above for an allusion to Pope's sporting metaphors.

217—18. Pattison quotes Sir John Davies, *Nosce Teipsum*, 1599, sect. XVIII. stanza 2, a passage which was probably in Pope's mind. Dryden used the same idea as a simile in the last four lines of *Marriage à la Mode*, 1673, act II. sc. i.

'Our souls sit close, and silently within,
And their own web from their own entrails spin;
And when eyes meet far off, our sense is such,
That, spider-like, we feel the tenderest touch.'

223. **barrier**] Note the obsolete accentuation on the last two syllables, pronounced as one.

225—6. The couplet is an echo of Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, 1681, ll. 163—4.

'Great wits are sure to madness near allied
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.'

227. **middle natures**] Natures which, belonging to one order, have faculties approximating to those of an order higher than their own, and so may be regarded as intermediate links in the scale of being. Pope has already given an instance in the case of the 'half-reas'ning elephant' (l. 222).

231. The construction is '[Since] the powers of all [are] subdued by thee alone.'

243—4. If this upward movement began, one order of beings attempting to encroach upon the powers of another, the failure of a single order to follow the others would snap a link in the chain of being, and so effect a void in creation.

251. **unbalanc'd**] Cf. Milton, *Par. Lost*, VII. 242, 'And Earth self-balanc'd on her centre hung.'

252. **run**] I.e. would run. So also 'nod' (l. 252) and 'tremble' (l. 256). Warburton in 1751 altered 'tremble' to 'trembles,' which has the advantage of expressing the consequence of the disaster more clearly, but was apparently not written by Pope.

253. **ruling angels**] Each of the nine spheres of heaven, between earth and the empyrean, was supposed to be under the governance

of one of the nine orders of celestial intelligences, ascending from angels to seraphim. See Dante, *Paradiso*, canto xxviii.

262. **mere engines]** I.e. as mere engines.

267—80. The idea of the presence of God in all created matter is similar to that expressed by Thomson in lines quoted in the note on l. 31 above, and resembles the thought of Wordsworth in *Tintern Abbey*,

‘A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.’

The pantheism of the eighteenth-century poets was, however, a different thing from Wordsworth's view of the interfusion of the creative spirit with nature, and resembles it mainly in similarity of phrase. To Wordsworth the study of nature leads man to the contemplation of the spiritual and immaterial. Pope, on the other hand, regards the spiritual as beyond man's contemplation, and directly implies that all that man can see of God is bounded by his own order, in which God, so far as man is concerned, is complete. This is clearly expressed in the opening of Epistle ii. Pope, writing to Caryll while his poem was still anonymous, hinted that this passage ‘at the first glance, may be taken for heathenism,’ and laid stress on ll. 277—8 as indicating the contrary, and proving him to be ‘quite Christian in his system, from man up to Seraphim.’

275. **mortal part]** I.e. the body, as opposed to the immortal part, the soul.

280. **equals]** is equal to. The idea in this couplet is similar to that in ll. 87—90 above. At first sight, the expression contradicts Pope's emphatic doctrine of the gradation of beings; but he appears to mean that God is completely manifest in each order of creation, each order being perfectly adapted to the relative place which it occupies in the scale of being, and consequently to God's purpose in creating it.

283. **point]** I.e. the space which man occupies: cf. l. 72 above.

286. **as blest as thou canst bear]** See note on l. 96 above. Earthly bliss, referred to here, is relative: the bliss to which hope looks forward is future and beyond this world.

288. Either in the hour of birth or in that of death.

291—2. These lines recall to a modern reader Browning's optimistic view of the presence of discord and evil in the world—e.g. 'Why rushed the discords in but that harmony should be prized?' (*Abt Vogler*.) Pope's advice, however, is to accept the discords contentedly in the conviction that they are not really discords: Browning endeavours to look beyond temporary discords to an ultimate and permanent harmony distinct from them.

EPISTLE II

ll. 1, 2. This famous couplet has been interpreted as encouraging man to leave the contemplation of divine perfection and look at nothing beyond himself. But the maxim *γνῶθι σεαυτόν* (know thyself) was the fundamental principle of ancient philosophy, which did not stop at the contemplation of man; and Pope may merely have intended to condemn the presumption of rash and ignorant speculation with regard to the designs of God—the type of reasoning characterised by Milton in *Par. Lost*, II. 555—69, the followers of which find 'no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.'

3. *isthmus*] Pope probably was thinking of Cowley, *Life and Fame*, stanza 1,

'Vain weak-built Isthmus, which dost proudly rise
Up betwixt two Eternities.'

'This narrow passage of Life,' notes Cowley, 'divides the Past Time from the Future, and is at last swallowed up into Eternity.' Pattison notes that the same image is employed by Prior, *Solomon*, book III.

5—6. *sceptic...stoic*] Cf. Ep. iv. ll. 19—26. In ll. 7—9 Pope appears to contrast the extremes of scepticism and stoicism between which man wavers.

7. *to act, or rest*] The meaning is rather doubtful. If, as in ll. 8 and 9, the stoic point of view is put first, it must mean 'to act with a certain belief, or to remain contented with things as they are.' But it may also mean 'to live a life of worldly activity, or be content with contemplation,' in which case the stoical view is put second. This is borne out by l. 101 below. Pope's knowledge of Greek philosophy was superficial, and his statement of the sceptical alternative in ll. 8 and 9 is overdrawn. In Ep. iv. ll. 21—2, 'action'

is characteristic as the end sought by the Cyrenaic school of philosophy.

11. His reason is such that he is equally ignorant, etc.

14. abus'd or disabus'd] Deceived or undeceived.

17—18. hurl'd...world] This rhyme has already been used twice in the poem: see Ep. I. 89—90, 253—4.

20—2. It is obvious that Pope was thinking of the discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton, whose *Principia*, 1687, was 'one of the landmarks in the history of mathematics. In it the phenomena of the solar system were shown to be deducible from laws which experience proved to be true on the earth, and thus it brought new worlds within the scope of man's investigations.' (W. W. Rouse Ball in *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, v. 720.) 'Correct old Time' is stated by Warburton to be a reference to Newton's treatise on Grecian Chronology. The adoption of the Gregorian calendar in place of the older method of reckoning the year can hardly be referred to: it had been adopted in the Romanist countries of Europe as early as 1582—6, and was no novelty, although it was not received in Great Britain till 1752.

23—4. Plato held the theory that the ideas of man were recollections of ideals which the soul of man had known in a former state before it was confined in the body. The ideals existed in the empyrean, the 'super-celestial place,' which 'no earthly poet has ever yet sung, nor will ever worthily sing.' (*Phaedrus*, 247 c.)

25. his follow'rs] The Neo-Platonist philosophers, the chief of whom, Plotinus, enlarged upon the Platonic distinction between the world of sense and the ideal world of intelligence. Plotinus' doctrine was that the soul, imprisoned in the world of sense, had forgotten God, and that, to regain its connexion with the ideal, it must rise out of its sensual surroundings, by a process of new intellectual birth, to a conception of the noble origin from which it had fallen. Pope refers to this in the words 'quitting sense' (l. 26); but 'sense' has evidently a double meaning, and implies that the Neo-Platonist doctrine degenerated into nonsense.

31. of late] Newton died in 1727.

34. as we shew an ape.] The simile in its present form is abrupt, and has been censured as a piece of bathos, although it is in keeping with Pope's theory of the chain of being. In his original

MS., instead of ll. 19—30, Pope wrote a passage, four lines of which indicate its contents:

‘As wisely sure a modest ape might aim
To be like Man, whose faculties and frame
He sees, he feels, as you or I to be
An angel thing we neither know nor see.’

This passage merely enlarges on a theme already discussed in Epistle 1. and was wisely abandoned. The simile itself is imitated from a passage of Palingenius (Paolo-Angelo Manzoli), who wrote a satirical poem called *Zodiacus Vitae* (2nd ed. Basel, 1537). It is certainly not complimentary to Newton.

37. **Who saw its fires]** I.e. could he, who saw the fires of the comet, etc.

43—52. Added in the edition of 1743.

50. Of all [e.g. those ingenious tricks (l. 47)] which our vices have made into arts.

53. Pope proceeds to expand the conflict between man's lower and higher parts, his passion and reason, summarised in l. 42 above. The division of the soul into two parts, the rational and the irrational or the part swayed by desire, is enunciated by Plato, *Republic*, 439 E. Pope seems to have been thinking of Cicero, *de Officiis*, I. 28, where the same distinction is made between the part ruled by appetite, ‘which carries man hither and thither,’ and that ruled by reason, ‘which teaches and makes clear what ought to be done or avoided.’ Cicero's conclusion is that reason should have the upper hand, and appetite should obey.

55. **this...that]** See note on Ep. 1. l. 163 above, and cf. ll. 61—2 below.

59—60. **spring...balance]** The metaphor is drawn from the mechanism of a watch.

59. **acts]** moves, causes to act. This is Cicero's ‘hominem huc et illuc rapit,’ translated above as ‘carries man hither and thither.’

61. **attend]** fix the mind upon.

62. **to no end]** to no purpose, uselessly.

71—2. Self-love [is] always stronger, as its objects [are] closer at hand; Reason's [objects] lie at a distance and in prospect.

76. **this]** Reason : that=Self-love. See ll. 61—2, 73 above, 89—90 below.

81. **schoolmen]** Metaphysicians. Strictly, medieval philosophers, whose lectures and disputations were carried on in the schools or lecture-rooms of universities.

83. **sense and reason]** 'Sense' here implies 'self-love,' which (l. 73) 'sees immediate good by present sense.' While Pope distinguishes between the methods of operation pursued by self-love and reason, he shews that they are both essential and inseparable elements of human nature. The tendency of the hair-splitting metaphysician, on the contrary, is to divorce one from the other, and represent self-love as an evil, reason as a good principle. Pope repudiates this dualism : see ll. 55—8 above.

91—2. The couplet is in apposition to and explains ll. 89—90. Pleasure is the end to which both principles work in different ways. Wrongly understood, i.e. by self-love without the restraint of reason, it becomes our greatest evil : rightly, i.e. with reason to check self-love, it becomes our greatest good.

93. Pattison notes that Butler, *Sermon* i. (Upon Human Nature), had already (1726) shown the fact that the passions are quite independent in themselves of self-love. Self-love may bring certain passions into play, but those passions are not therefore identical with it.

99. **Those, that imparted]** The passions, when the care of reason is imparted to them.

101. **lazy apathy]** The apathy (*ἀπάθεια*) of the Stoics was not an insensibility to passion, but to those extremes of passion which disturb the soul. It was therefore in no sense lazy, but needed that constant exercise which Pope (l. 104) rightly identifies with strength of mind, but applies wrongly. Throughout this part of the poem, Pope's argument suffers from looseness of thought and phrase.

105. **puts in act]** Cf. 'acts' in l. 59 above.

108. **card.]** The mariner's compass, the 'shipman's card' of *Macbeth*, act i. sc. ii.—i.e. the paper upon which the points of the compass are marked.

110. 'He maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind' (Ps. civ. 3).

114. 'Can man annihilate the passions, which are the elements of his being?' Another allusion to the apathy of the Stoics, as Pope imagined it.

125. **Present...future]** Understand 'pleasures.'

131. **Master Passion]** Cf. *Moral Essays*, Ep. I. 174—265.

137. **cast]** Moulded.

139. **vital humour]** The four humours of the body to which the health, and consequently the temperament, were supposed to be subject, were the blood, the phlegm, and yellow and black bile, corresponding to the sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholy tempers, each of which was produced by an excess of its particular humour over the rest.

149—50. Although we are subject to the lawful sway of reason, reason is but a weak queen in face of the master passion which is ingrained in our nature. She (ll. 151, etc.) = reason. It is obvious that what follows tends to neutralise the advice given in l. 78 above. Attention to reason becomes merely subservience to the master passion which uses reason as its tool.

167—8. Men are tossed about by other passions, as a ship by varying winds, but the master passion drives them straight to a certain end.

177. **mercury]** The volatile element in human nature.

179. The dross is man's nature. Without union with the master passion, virtue, a purely mental quality, would be too refined for its exercise by man.

181—2. The inaccuracy of expression is remarked by Pattison. It is twofold, for fruits cannot be grafted upon anything, and when slips from one plant are grafted upon another stock, it is the stock which produces life. This, obvious in itself, is recognised in the sequel.

186. **spleen]** It is supposed that Pope was thinking of Swift. The maxim is, however, of general application.

194. Throughout this passage Pope was guided by the theories advanced in Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*. Shame and pride, according to Mandeville, are 'the two passions in which the seeds of most virtues are contained.' Pope commits himself to the hypothesis that the passions are naturally vicious, but that virtue cannot

exist save as an off-shoot from them. Butler, *Sermon 1*, holds the contrary and more reasonable view that 'the principles and passions in the mind of man, which are distinct both from self-love [i.e. the principle which tends to the security and good of the individual] and benevolence [i.e. that which has the same tendency with regard to society], primarily and most directly lead to right behaviour with regard to others as well as himself, and only secondarily and accidentally to what is evil.' He shews that the end of emulation and envy is merely a certain 'equality and superiority': it is the evil means which the envious man uses which creates the distinction between the two. Similarly, 'the original tendency of shame is to prevent the doing of shameful actions; and its leading men to conceal such actions when done, is only in consequence of their being done; i.e., of the passion's not having answered its first end.' Pope preferred the less profound and more specious theory.

197. **Reason]** The various parts which reason plays in the course of this argument are an indication of the difficulty which Pope felt with regard to the consistency of his scheme. Reason is at first the necessary check upon self-love (ll. 67—80). Its power is then neutralised by the confession of its servitude to the master passion (ll. 149—60). An attempt is then made to reinstate it as a watchful guardian, in compromise with the master passion (ll. 161—4), but (ll. 169—74) it relapses into the position of complacent slave. Now, when the theory has been advanced that the master passion, naturally vicious, is the root of human virtue, reason is brought in as the guide which leads man to virtue, and gives a favourable direction to his vices, and is deified as the 'God within the mind' (l. 204). From this point of view, Nero and Catiline needed only reason to convert their crimes into virtues.

200. **Decius]** Publius Decius Mus the elder in B.C. 340 sacrificed himself in the battle of Vesuvius against the Latins, in obedience to a dream which warned him and his fellow-consuls that one of the generals would die and the opposing army be destroyed. His son imitated his example at the battle of Sentinum, fought against the Gauls in B.C. 295.

Curtius] The Roman who in B.C. 362 is said to have devoted his life to his country by leaping into the chasm in the forum.

203—16. These lines, according to the Argument at the beginning of the book, should form section iv. Section v is formed by ll. 217—36; section vi with its subdivisions by ll. 237—end. These divisions were not regarded in the text of the early editions, and the lines are not accurately numbered in the Argument.

203—4. Gen. i. 4.

204. **The God within the mind]** Reason. Warburton explained it as 'a Platonic phrase for Conscience; and here employed with great judgment and propriety.' But conscience has not entered into Pope's argument, and his object in the preceding lines has been to restore the balance in favour of reason. See note on l. 197.

217—8. Probably imitated from Dryden, *Hind and Panther*, r. 33—4,

'For Truth has such a face and such a mien
As to be lov'd needs only to be seen.'

220. **pity]** Condone. The sense of the word is strained.

225. **in the first degree]** i.e. in its unqualified form.

228. **the rage]** the emotion.

230. **hard]** The man who lives in an atmosphere of vice becomes hardened to it, as the natives of Greenland or Nova Zembla (l. 224) to the cold.

236. **Self]** Self-love comes uppermost in the argument again, and the functions of the 'God within the mind' appear to be reduced to a mere perception of the distinction between virtue and vice.

241. **apply'd]** The tense is changed to suit the rhyme.

242. **Shame...pride]** See note on l. 194. Pope's use of terms in ll. 242—5 is founded on the idea, there noted, that such emotions are essentially frailties of human nature. But the virgin's shame = modesty: the matron's pride = self-esteem, as distinct from self-conceit and arrogance; and these can hardly be called frailties. Similarly fear, rashness and presumption are frailties, but not happy frailties: statesmen, generals and kings are to be complimented, not for these, but for caution, courage and self-reliance; and the frailty of crowds is to be defined, not as belief, but as credulity. The fundamental error of the notion which Pope lightly adopted is exposed by his confusion of terms in this passage, the general sense of which, however, must claim the merit of consistency with what has gone before.

257. **its**] life's.

269. **chemist**] The alchemist, happy in the prospect of producing gold from his experiments.

272. **pride**] Identical with the 'happy frailty' of the matron in l. 242 above, and distinct from the presumptuous pride which is rebuked in Ep. i.

274. **Hope**] Cf. Ep. i. ll. 91—8. There, however, as in Ep. iv. 341—52, hope is the expectation of future bliss. Here it is the stimulus to the ruling passion, which rests uncontented with its present attainments, and, even in death, looks forward to a perfect gratification in another life.

278. **louder...empty**] I.e. louder than the rattle, but quite as empty.

279. **Scarves**] The contemporary use of the broad black silk scarf is commented on in *Spectator*, nos. 21, 609, which shew that it was properly a distinguishing mark of doctors of divinity and members of cathedral chapters. It was probably a survival of the black choral cope which was worn over the surplice as part of the medieval quire habit, but it has also been connected with the tippet, known as the almuce or amess, which was worn above the cope in quire. *Spectator*, no. 609, shews that it had become a common distinction of a nobleman's chaplain, and it is probably this special use to which Pope refers as the end of clerical ambition.

garters] The nobleman's ambition, to be invested with the order of the Garter.

280. **beads**] Rosaries. The word 'bead' is derived from the old English *biddan*=to pray (cf. German *bitten*), which survives in the phrase 'bidding prayer.' A bead is a prayer: thus the old word *bede-house* (i.e. *almshouse*)=a house of prayer, and its inmate, a *bedesman*, is primarily bound to pray for its founders. Each of the small circular pieces of wood or other material strung on a rosary represents a separate prayer of a cycle to which the whole number corresponds; and from these the word came to have its present general significance.

283. **Opinion**] Private judgment. Identical with 'wit oblique' in Ep. iii. l. 231. Cf. Ep. i. l. 114.

285—6. The argument of ll. 271—4 is here more tersely repeated,

Hope supplies a compensation for imperfect happiness: pride consoles the failure of the senses to grasp their object.

294. In the general conclusion, neither 'mean self-love' nor reason has the advantage, but the whole of life is dependent upon the working of an ideal Wisdom, which, in spite of the hypothesis of an indwelling divinity in man (l. 204, and Ep. i. l. 277), is here treated as extraneous to him.

EPISTLE III

4. **trim]** Handsome appearance.

9. **plastic Nature]** 'Plastic' = forming into shape. Bolingbroke used the kindred phrase 'fashioning Nature.'

18. The idea is closely akin to Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, ii. 78, 'Et quasi cursores, vitæ lampada tradunt,' part of a passage to which the general sense of these lines bears some resemblance. Lucretius, however, uses the simile of runners in a torch-race: each living thing, as it dies, hands on the torch of life to another. Pope uses the idea without the simile.

21. **foreign]** I.e. to the general plan of creation.

22—3. The statement has already been made at length in Ep. i. ll. 267—80, on which see note. The language here closely recalls Vergil, *Æneid* vi. 724 sqq., translated by Dryden (*Æneid* vi. 980 sqq.):

'Know first that heaven and earth's compacted frame,
And flowing waters, and the starry flame,
And both the radiant lights, one common soul
Inspires and feeds and animates the whole,' etc.

24. Cf. Ep. ii. ll. 249—52.

27. Pope returns to the arguments of pride, presented in Ep. i. ll. 131 sqq. In introducing the subject of the relation of man to society, some old ground has to be covered; and much of this portion of the poem is merely repetition.

30. **lawn]** The proper meaning of 'laund' or 'lawn' is a grassy glade or clearing in a forest, as in Dryden, *Hind and Panther*, i. 2. There are several survivals of this meaning in the place-names of

forest districts, e.g. Laund priory in Leicestershire, and Morhay and Beanfield lawns in Rockingham forest, Northants. Cf. Gray, *Elegy*, stanza 25, 'To meet the sun upon the upland lawn'; Tennyson, *Dream of Fair Women*, stanza 45, 'A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn.'

32. **Joy]** I.e. his personal joy.

38. **vindicate]** make good their claim to.

39. **the golden year]** Autumn.

44. Cf. Ep. i. l. 176. The words 'a monarch' were substituted for the MS. 'Sir Gilbert,' i.e. the wealthy Sir Gilbert Heathcote, alluded to in *Moral Essays*, Ep. III. 101—2. The alteration was probably made in order to remove a characteristic touch which might betray the anonymous author, but possibly also owing to Sir Gilbert's death in 1733.

46. The goose, in the early editions of the poem, received fuller treatment.

'What care to tend, to lodge, to cram, to treat him!

All this he knew; but not that 'twas to eat him.

As far as goose could judge, he reason'd right;

But as to Man, mistook the matter quite.'

These lines, with other passages in which Pope let his wit have the advantage of the dignity of his theme, were cut out of the poem in its definitive form.

50. **wit]** I.e. the ruling intelligence. The lines which follow, in which man is represented as the benefactor of the lower beings, have been censured as contradicting Ep. i. l. 117, and ll. 161—4 below, which emphasise the destructive and bloodthirsty nature of man. Both elements, however, exist in man's nature. If any adverse criticism may be passed upon Pope in this respect, it is that, anxious to prove his thesis of the dependence of the lower orders upon the higher, he exaggerates the beauty of a benevolence which, as he clearly indicates, is prompted by self-interest and allied motives. It will be noted that he omits any instances of man's disinterested care for the lower creatures. In ll. 57—8 the examples given are all cases in which man preserves in order to destroy.

56. **Philomela]** the nightingale. Pope alludes to the form of the legend of the daughters of Pandion, in which Tereus, pursuing

Philomela and Procne, was changed into a hawk. Philomela became a nightingale and Procne a swallow.

59—60. The three motives, self-interest, self-gratification, and vanity, actually appear to be mingled. It would be difficult to maintain Pope's comparative distinction of them in detail.

63. **learned]** His hunger is skilled by experience in selecting what will assuage it.

65. Cf. Ep. i. ll. 81—4.

68. **touch æthereal]** Lightning. The phrase is taken from Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, l. 549,

‘The Eastern ray, translucent, pure,

With touch ætherial of Heav’n’s fiery rod,’

where, however, it is used in another sense. Pope’s idea, expressed in a note, was that ‘several of the ancients, and many of the Orientals since, esteemed those who were struck by lightning as sacred persons, and the particular favourites of heaven.’ Pattison shews that this theory rests on no ground, and may arise from one or more misconceptions. The Greek view was that persons struck by lightning or thunderbolts were the object of the wrath of heaven: thus Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 397, makes Strepsiades express the popular opinion that ‘Zeus clearly sends the thunderbolt upon perjurers.’ Possibly the legend of the removal of Romulus from earth in a fiery chariot during a storm, or (as the reference to Oriental sources may indicate) a rationalistic explanation of the translation of Elijah, may have been the foundation of Pope’s notion. Thomson had not heard it; for he introduces his episode of the lovers struck by lightning in *Summer* with the words

‘And yet not always on the guilty head

Descends the fated flash,’

and the sequel of the story contains no hint of Heaven’s special favour to the victims. Pope’s epitaph on John Hughes and Sarah Drew, whose end was that of Thomson’s Amelia and Celadon, contains the idea conveyed in the present passage:

‘Think not, by rig’rous judgment seiz’d,

A pair so faithful could expire;

Victims so pure Heav’n saw well pleas’d,

And snatch’d them in celestial fire.’

71—8. Virtually a repetition of Ep. i. ll. 77 sqq.

73. **such a view**] The prospect of a future life.

79. Pope's difficulty in assigning a definite place to reason in human nature (see note on Ep. ii. l. 197) is further demonstrated in the passage which follows. He has had hard work to maintain its position in relation to self-love: here he entirely dethrones it from its identity with 'the God within the mind' in favour of instinct, which (see note on l. 95 below) is indistinguishable from self-love.

84. **pope or council**] Metaphorically used, but not exactly the metaphor which we should expect from Pope, a nominal Romanist.

85—7. These lines involve a contradiction to Ep. ii. ll. 77—80. If reason is so unready to help us, there can be little good in cultivating the habit of attention to her.

88. **a volunteer**] Of her own accord.

90. Human intelligence, unaided by instinct, falls too wide or too short of its mark.

95. **the acting and comparing pow'rs**] This is precisely the distinction drawn between self-love and reason in Ep. ii. ll. 59—60. Self-love, instinct and nature (l. 91 above) amount with Pope to the same thing. Here he adds that instinct and reason, conflicting qualities from a human point of view, are in reality inseparable, and there is no conflict between them. At the same time, if reason is merely human, instinct divine, the use of reason 'to check, delib'rate, and advise' (Ep. ii. l. 70) is neutralised.

102. **Build on the wave**] The legend of the kingfisher or halcyon is alluded to. She was supposed to build her nest on the sea, which remained perfectly calm during the period of nesting: hence the phrase 'halcyon days' for calm weather.

104. **De Moivre**] Abraham de Moivre, born at Vitry (Marne) in 1667, came to England in consequence of the revocation of the edict of Nantes (1685) and settled in London in 1688. He was a prominent mathematician and member of Sir Isaac Newton's circle. His discoveries in trigonometry, the foundation of which appeared in his *Miscellanea Analytica* (1730), brought his name into special repute while Pope was writing the *Essay on Man*. He died in 1754.

107. **the council.**] I.e. of the storks about to migrate.

111—12. Cf. Ep. II. ll. 249—52, etc.

115. **æther**] A fluid thinner than air, which was supposed to envelop the bodies of the solar system. The theory that life was due to the penetration of this subtle element originated with the Stoics whom Pope so despised.

117. **one nature**] Instinct: see note on l. 95 above. Pope proceeds to enunciate the doctrine that self-love extends to love of species.

133. **Reason**] Instinct is here aided and improved by reason. It is difficult to reconcile this with the doctrine summarised in ll. 97—8 above.

136. Each ruling passion produces its own allied virtue: see Ep. II. ll. 175—80.

138. **benevolence**] Social love: see the extract from Butler, *Sermon* I. in note on Ep. II. l. 194. Charities = the natural instincts of affection. 'Charity' is the passion: benevolence the virtue.

140. Each new generation of mankind was endowed with natural affection, i.e. the instinctive self-love which, extending itself to its mate and offspring, becomes a habit, as new generations arise.

143—4. The memory of youth in the elder generation, in which natural instinct has developed social love, coincides with undeveloped instinct in the younger. Each supplies that quality which in the old is a thing of the past, in the young a thing of the future.

149. Self-love and social love began at the birth of nature.

153. His table and his bed were identical with those of the beasts.

154. Man in his earliest state killed no beasts to provide himself with clothes and food. Pope appears to have used for this passage Dryden's translation of the long speech of Pythagoras in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, xv. especially ll. 101—207, e.g. the 'blameless priest' (l. 158 below) is the antithesis of Dryden's 'bloody priest' (*Of the Pythagorean Philosophy*, l. 161). The likeness, however, is one of general sense and argument rather than of phrase.

161—4. See note on l. 50 above.

162. **tomb**] Pattison notes the likeness to Lucretius v. 991, 'Viva videns vivo sepeliri viscera busto,' i.e. 'seeing living entrails buried in a living tomb.' The same idea, however, occurs in Ovid,

Met. xv. 88, 'Heu quantum scelus est in viscera viscera condi,' enlarged by Dryden (ut sup. ll. 125—6) into

'O impious use! to Nature's laws oppos'd,
Where bowels are in other bowels clos'd.'

170. **To copy Instinct]** Reason then performed its proper task of following nature's road (see *Ep.* II. l. 115, etc.).

174. **physic of the field]** So Dryden, *Ep.* xv. l. 116 :

'He 'scapes the best, who, nature to repair,
Draws physic from the fields, in draughts of vital air.'

177. **nautilus]** The paper nautilus or *argonauta*. The common legend was that, as it swam, it erected two of its arms, the ends of which are furnished with thin broad membranes, as sails, and used two others as oars at the side. Pope quotes from Oppian, *Hulieutica*, to this effect.

185. **those]** The ants : these (l. 187) = the bees.

192. Justice is a matter of instinct, as seen in the commonwealths of the animal world : reason fetters justice by formulating strict rules for its administration.

198. **gods.]** Pope alludes to the theory by which the pagan deities were explained as having originally been men, whom human admiration for their powers had deified.

208. The line is taken bodily from *Eloisa to Abelard*, ll. 91—2 :

'Oh! happy state! when souls each other draw,
When love is liberty, and nature law.'

223. **drooping, sick'ning, dying]** This refers to the ruler. When he drooped, sickened, died, they began to mourn him as man whom they revered as God.

225. **explor'd]** discovered by search.

226. **that first]** I.e. that first Father. Elwin objects to the apparent contradiction between this theory of the origin of man's knowledge of God and the statement (l. 148) that 'the state of nature was the reign of God.' But it does not follow that a knowledge of God is implied on the part of the original followers of nature.

227. **this All begun]** 'Begun' is bad grammar for the sake of a rhyme, and is used in the sense of 'had a beginning.' The alternative theory to that which deduced the existence of God from that

of an earthly father is that which supposed the existence of a finite universe to be dependent upon a First Cause, a belief handed down through every generation from the beginning of the world.

231. **wit oblique**] In antithesis to 'simple reason' (l. 230), the steady light of which is broken into various rays, as light is broken by a prism, by the indirect and multiform workings of human intelligence.

232. **all was right**] Cf. the maxim in Ep. i. l. 294.

238. **but a sov'reign good**] only as a sovereign good. The punctuation, which is that of the early editions, indicates a somewhat different sense, which would be less forcible.

241. **enslav'd... undone**] Predicative, i.e. so that they were enslaved, etc.

242. **enormous**] In its literal sense, out of the norm, abnormal.

244. **counter-work its Cause.**] As in ll. 236—8 above, Pope places the idea of the human tyrant, endowed with divine right, in opposition to the paternal government of a sovereign Being who is all-good.

245. **law**] Cf. l. 192 above.

249—52. The passage is apparently a reminiscence of Lucretius, v. 1217, etc., 'Præterea, cui non animus,' etc. 'Moreover, whose soul is not curdled by awe of the gods? Whose limbs do not creep with terror, when the parched earth quivers under the dread thunderbolt, and murmurings run throughout high heaven? Do not peoples and nations tremble, and proud kings, stricken with fear, clasp the limbs of the gods,' etc. Also ll. 1235—9, 'Lastly, when the whole earth is quaking underfoot, and cities are shaken to their fall, and nod, threatening ruin, what wonder, if mortal men despise themselves and acknowledge in surrender that the great and wondrous powers in matter are the might of the gods, with power to govern all things?'

260. **And, form'd**] I.e. and such as, in form like tyrants.

261. **charity**] Natural affection or good-will: cf. l. 138. See also the importance given to charity, the love of man for his fellow-beings, in l. 308 below.

263—4. Men no longer regarded the open air as their proper place of worship: their altars, originally simple shrines in the open,

were now made of marble, and bloody sacrifices took the place of prayer. Lines 263—8 form a studied antithesis to ll. 155—60.

265. **flamen**] The flamen in the Roman religious scheme was a priest attached to the service of one particular deity. The word means one who burns or offers sacrifices. The priest, according to Pope, first sacrificed the lower creatures, then appeased his idol with human sacrifice, and finally took the attributes of Heaven into his hands, and pretended to control them to gain advantage over his opponents.

269. Pope returns to the theme of self-love and the ruling passion, which, while they produce the unbridled power of tyrants, tend also to secure and establish that power, and to turn it to virtuous ends.

278. Every man is ambitious of becoming a tyrant: it is therefore to his interest to protect existing tyranny, the overthrow of which would neutralise his ambition.

286. **moral**] moral law. See ll. 239—40 above, as to the nature of 'true faith, true policy.'

287. **Re-lum'd**] Gave fresh brightness to Nature's ancient light, which had grown dim but had not gone out.

292. **touching one**] I.e. the act of touching one. The various interests of the state are compared to the strings of a lyre.

303—4. Foolish men follow one interest at the expense of the rest: the best administration is that which harmonises the 'jarring interests' of a state (l. 293 above) under one form of government employed with justice and virtue. See note on Ep. iv. l. 95.

306. Pope was thinking of Cowley's lines *On the Death of Mr Crashaw*:

'His faith perhaps in some nice tenants might

Be wrong; his Life, I'm sure, was in the right.'

The fight of zealots on behalf of their particular mode of faith is pursued at the expense of nature and reason alike: the true value of the faith which a man professes is proved by his unswerving adherence to 'nature's road' in his profession.

309. **All**] I.e. forms of government or modes of faith.

315. **two consistent motions**] Self-love and benevolence or social love.

act the soul] Cf. Ep. II. l. 59.

317. **God and Nature]** God, acting by means of natural instinct.
Cf. l. 98 above.

EPISTLE IV

6. The fool overlooks happiness because he regards it as detached from virtue: the wise man sees it double because virtue is essential to it.

10. **di'monds]** The spelling follows the contemporary pronunciation of the word, which still survives among old-fashioned people.

11. **Parnassian laurels]** The rewards of the poet.

12. **iron harvests]** The *ferrea seges* of Vergil, e.g. *Aeneid*, III. 46; XII. 663. Dryden (*Aen.* XII. 964) translates the phrase in the second passage 'iron harvest.'

15. **sincere]** In the primary sense of 'unalloyed.'

18. **St John]** See note on Ep. I. l. 1.

20. **This...that]** One and another learned man.

21. **action]** The note in the early editions points out that the school of philosophers alluded to is the Cyrenaic sect; the founder of which was Aristippus, a younger contemporary of Socrates. Its outward manifestation (l. 22) was the pursuit of the pleasures of the senses and a keen sensibility to material beauty.

ease] Explained as referring to the followers of Democritus of Abdera, who conceived the end of happiness to be 'a certain tranquillity or calmness of mind, which they call Εὐθυμία' (*euthumia*).

23. **sunk to beasts]** The Epicurean school. Pope, who appears to have read Lucretius, ought to have recognised that the philosophy of Epicurus laid its stress on mental, not sensual, pleasures: its actual ideal of happiness was ἀταξία (*ataraxia*), a state of mind in which the soul, concentrated upon such pleasures, is free from disturbance or pain. As a matter of fact, the sensual abandonment implied here is more in keeping with an extreme development of Cyrenaic principles, which Epicurus ennobled by his doctrine.

24. **swell'd to gods]** The Stoics. See note on Ep. II. l. 101. The Stoics held that all happiness came from within the soul, but certainly, so far from undervaluing virtue, made its practice their

exclusive end. Marcus Aurelius made the pursuit of virtue the natural end of man, 'a very priest and minister of the gods, well acquainted and in good correspondence with Him especially that is seated and placed within himself, as in a temple or sacrary.' 'Unspotted by pleasure, undaunted by pain,' the Stoic was 'deeply dyed and drenched in righteousness.' Pope perhaps means that even the practice of virtue was vain, as it afforded no hope of future happiness.

26. **To trust in everything]** The school of Protagoras held that man was the measure of all things, and consequently that things only exist for each man as he sees them. Thus human imagination and opinion are the only grounds of belief, and all phenomena are actually existent, not merely apparent, to the mind which conceives them.

doubt of all] Pyrrho and the sceptics held the opposite view, that all things are merely apparent, and have no existence which can be proved.

29. **Take Nature's path]** The remedy already prescribed, Ep. II. l. 161.

34. Common sense, the path of nature, is equivalent to general happiness.

35—6. See Ep. III. ll. 1, 2 The general law is social, not individual happiness.

39—40. No form of happiness is pursued by individuals without some thought of their species or obedience to its promptings.

40. A reminiscence of Donne's famous simile of the compasses in *A Valediction forbidding Mourning*. The twin souls of the poet and his mistress are compared to the two legs of a pair of compasses, of which the lady's soul is fixed and cannot move from home:

'And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.'

42. **cavern'd hermit]** Pope's illustration is strikingly confirmed by the case of St Benedict, the founder of western monasticism. His retirement to a hermitage was imitated by others, and in process of

time he found it necessary to form his followers into communities, for which he composed his rule of a social, as opposed to a solitary, religious life.

45. **Abstract]** I.e. if we abstract from our happiness, etc.

47. **more]** I.e. the man who excludes the thought of others from his happiness tries to gain more than his proper share.

49. **Order]** This has been illustrated at length in Ep. i. ll. 233—58.

52. **common sense]** See l. 34 above.

55—6. The theme and conclusion of Ep. iii. restated.

59. **In who]** In those who—an awkward ellipse.

64. Pope has already indicated that self-interest prompts the laws which restrain men from complete equality: Ep. iii. ll. 269—82.

70. I.e. the unhappy are encouraged by hope of future betterment, while the happy are restrained from presumption by fear of future evil.

74. **mountains pil'd on mountains]** The giants strove to attack the gods in their own seat by piling mounts Pelion and Ossa on Olympus.

84. The bad have less enjoyment in the gifts of fortune, in proportion as the gifts which they obtain are worse.

94. **to]** I.e. more than. 'Fancy' is used with the construction of 'prefer.'

95. **the best]** With most regard to virtue. This helps to explain 'best' in Ep. iii. l. 304.

97. **alone]** The adjective refers, of course, to 'fools.' Only fools call the good unhappy, because they suffer ills or accidents which may happen to anyone.

99. **Falkland]** Lucius Cary, second viscount Falkland, who died at the battle of Newbury, Sept. 1643. His character is drawn by Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion*, in two famous passages, and has been used in more recent times by Matthew Arnold, as the text of an essay upon the advantages of 'sweet reasonableness.'

100. **Turenne]** Henry de la Tour-d'Auvergne, vicomte de Turenne, whose victories brought about the end of the Thirty Years' War and established Louis XIV's sovereignty in the wars of the Fronde. He laid waste the Palatinate in 1674, and died at the battle of Salzbach, 27 July 1675.

101. **Sidney]** Sir Philip Sidney, died at Arnhem in the Low Countries, 1586, of a wound received at the battle of Zutphen.

104. **Digby]** Robert Digby, son of William, fifth baron Digby. He died in 1726. Pope wrote the epitaph for the tablet erected to him and his sister in the south transept of Sherborne abbey church. Several letters passed between him and Pope from 1717 onwards, and Pope, after Digby's death, wrote a letter of condolence to his brother, which is printed at the end of the series.

106. Lord Digby was born in 1661, and was therefore in his seventy-third year. He lived to be ninety-one, dying in 1752.

107. **Marseilles' good bishop]** Henri-François-Xavier de Belsunce de Castèl-Moron, bishop of Marseilles 1709—55. M. de Belsunce was distinguished by his devoted conduct during the plague which destroyed one-third of the inhabitants of Marseilles between June and December, 1720. The story is told in a popular form by Charlotte M. Yonge, *A Book of Golden Deeds*, ch. xxxiv.

110. **a parent]** Pope's mother, Edith, daughter of William Turner of Towthorpe, Yorks., died in June 1733, aged ninety-three. Her loss was therefore fresh in his memory when this part of the poem was written.

111. The causes of and the part of Heaven in physical and moral ill have been discussed in Ep. I. ll. 141—64. See also Ep. II. l. 198, where the failure of will to respond to reason is made responsible for the vices of Nero.

114—6. Either the ill of the individual is the good of the whole, or change suffers it, or Nature allows it to happen; but such partial ill lasted only a little time and happened rarely, until man himself made it a permanent feature in the order of things. 'Improv'd' is of course ironical.

123. **Ætna]** Warburton supposed that there was an allusion here 'to those two great Naturalists, Empedocles and Pliny, who both perish'd by too near an approach to Ætna and Vesuvius, while they were exploring the cause of their eruptions.' Pope, as Pattison suggests, may have confused the two incidents; but Empedocles committed suicide, and Vesuvius is not Etna. The allusion to Etna is probably quite general.

126. **Bethel]** Hugh Bethell, one of the Bethells of Rise in the

East Riding of Yorkshire. Pope dedicated the second satire of his *Imitations of Horace* to him: see ll. 129—32;

‘Thus Bethel spoke, who always speaks his thought,
And always thinks the very thing he ought:
His equal mind I copy what I can,
And, as I love, would imitate the man.’

Four of Pope’s published letters are directed to him.

128. **you]** Addressed to Bolingbroke. See also ll. 240, 260 below.

130. **Chartres]** Francis Chartres occurs more than once as an object of Pope’s condemnation. See *Moral Essays*, Ep. II. l. 64 and Ep. III. l. 20, where a long note gives details of his infamous career, and preserves a satirical epitaph composed upon him by Dr Arbuthnot. He died in 1731, before the present passage was written.

Pope originally concluded this passage with the couplet:

‘No—in a scene far higher Heav’n imparts
Rewards for spotless hands, and honest hearts.’

This was omitted from the printed copies.

137. **Calvin]** The reformer John Calvin (1509—64), who, in his *Institutio religionis Christianae* (Basel, 1537), formulated the doctrines followed by the French reformed sects. Pope probably introduces his name here owing to the sharp distinction which he drew, and his followers emphasised, between the elect who formed God’s church or kingdom on earth, and those who, by God’s foreknowledge, stood outside it. This exclusive doctrine naturally made him an object of extreme admiration or detestation, in proportion as it found favour or was rejected.

145. **Whatever is, is right]** Cf. Ep. I. l. 294; III. 232.

146. **Titus]** Already cited as a contrast to the vices of Nero, Ep. II. l. 198. The story alluded to in l. 148 is told by Suetonius. Titus, remembering one evening that he had conferred no benefit upon anyone during the day, exclaimed ‘My friends, I have lost a day!’

149. Pope puts an objection in the mouth of an imaginary interlocutor. This method of argument is used in the famous *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, which is written in the form of a dialogue between

Arbuthnot and Pope. The unequal distribution of happiness was a favourite theme of Bolingbroke in his philosophical excursions.

157. **riches**] Pope's valuation of riches, from the satirical point of view, is seen in *Moral Essays*, Ep. III. 17—20:

‘Riches, in effect,
No grace of Heav’n or token of th’ elect;
Giv’n to the fool, the mad, the vain, the evil,
To Ward, to Waters, Chartres, and the devil.’

160. Why should the good man enjoy a limited power? Why should he be merely a private individual? Why should he not be a king?

161. **external for internal**] outward rewards for inward virtue.

171. **gown**] Probably the gown of a doctor's degree at one of the universities.

172. This line is supposed to reflect on George II. and his reliance upon Walpole, whom Bolingbroke was at this time actively opposing. Pope's imitation of Horace's *Epistle to Augustus*, written in 1737, is an ironical attack upon George II. and his policy: his opinion of the king's public spirit is declared, e.g., in the concluding apostrophe (l. 397):

‘Your country's peace, how oft, how dearly bought!’

He has shewn, however, in Ep. III. that, while the king or tyrant naturally pursues a course of action hostile to public spirit, self-interest and self-preservation induce him to act with benevolence.

176. **now**] Now you are a man. The trifling pleasures of childhood, however, according to Ep. II. ll. 279—82, are succeeded in manhood by equally trifling ambitions, proportioned to the age of the individual.

177. **the Indian**] As in Ep. I. l. 99 sqq., where (l. 112) the Indian's hopes with regard to his dog are mentioned.

179. **As well**] In sense this precedes ‘expect’ (l. 178).

193. **condition**] Rank: cf. l. 57 above.

196. **flaunts...flutters**] The verbs are applied to the wrong substantives, to suit the scansion. Pope's first version read:

‘Oft of two brothers, one shall be survey'd
Flutt'ring in rags, one flaunting in brocade.’

203. **fellow]** I.e. the common fellow.

204. **prunella]** The silk or worsted material of which graduates' and other gowns were made. It is interesting to note, in the present context, that prunella was used at a later date for the uppers of shoes.

206. **That]** The word is emphasised, as referring to the last line. The couplet points to the Duke of Marlborough: cf. ll. 289—90 below.

207—8. The lines are imitated from Boileau, Sat. v. 85—6:

'Et si leur sang, tout pur ainsi que leur noblesse,
Est passé jusqu'à vous, de Lucrèce en Lucrèce.'

Pope gives the second syllable of 'Lucrece' its French pronunciation. He originally wrote

'Thy boasted blood, a thousand years or so
May from Lucretia to Lucretia flow.'

The couplet first appeared in its present form in 1743.

216. **Howards]** Pope alludes to the Howards as a typically noble and ancient family, of which the dukes of Norfolk, the premier secular peers, were in his day, as in ours, the chief representatives.

220. **Macedonia's madman]** Alexander the Great: 'young Ammon' of Ep. i. l. 160, where the context is equally unfavourable. Pope's estimate of Alexander's character has been censured by most critics as unjust and shallow: its value is, of course, purely rhetorical and must not be taken seriously. It is probably imitated from Boileau, Sat. viii. 99, 100, where the satirist answers an imaginary objector:

"Quoi donc! à votre avis, fut-ce un fou qu'Alexandre?"

— Qui? cet écervelé qui mit l'Asie en cendre?"

The stories of the burning of the palace at Persepolis and of the murder of Clitus have had more weight with poets than the historical importance of Alexander's conquests. With such estimates may be contrasted the fine lines in Matthew Arnold, *Tristram and Iseult*, III.:

'Or that renown'd mirror of chivalry,
Prince Alexander, Philip's peerless son,
Who carried the great war from Macedon
Into the Soudan's realm, and thunder'd on
To die at thirty-five in Babylon.'

the Swede.] Charles XII., king of Sweden 1697—1718, the opponent of Peter the Great, by whom he was defeated at the battle of Poltawa (1709). He died while besieging the fortress of Frederiksten in Norway.

‘His fall was destin’d to a barren strand,
A petty fortress, and a dubious hand;
He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral or adorn a tale.’

(Johnson, *Vanity of Human Wishes*.) Voltaire’s *Histoire de Charles XII.* had appeared recently (1731).

229. those...these] Heroes...wise men.

235. Aurelius] The emperor, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who began to reign in 161 and died at Sirmium in 180. For the character of the philosophy which he practised in his daily life, see note on l. 24 above.

bleed] Socrates did not bleed: he was executed by poison. Pope may have confused his death with that of Seneca, whose veins were opened in a bath.

240. my Lord] Bolingbroke. Cf. l. 128 above.

Tully] The great Roman orator, statesman and philosopher, Marcus Tullius Cicero. The comparison is very flattering to Bolingbroke.

244. Eugene] Eugene Francis, prince of the house of Savoy-Carignano, son of Eugene, count of Soissons, and great-grandson of Charles Emmanuel, the great duke of Savoy. He was born in 1663: his great successes were achieved at the head of the imperial armies in the war of the Spanish succession, at Oudenarde, and in conjunction with Marlborough at Blenheim and Malplaquet. He was beaten by Villars at Denain in 1712: later (1716–17) he defended the Austrian frontier against the Turks at Peterwardein and Belgrade. In 1732 he was again called to command the imperial forces against France, and so was before the public when these lines were written: he died in 1736.

246. Rubicon] In 49 B.C. Caesar declared war upon the Roman republic by crossing the small stream Rubico (now Pisciatello), which flows into the Adriatic between Ravenna and Rimini, and formed the boundary between Italy and Gallia Cisalpina.

Rhine] Eugene’s business was to defend the Rhenish frontier of

the empire against France. His chief successes, however, were not achieved upon the Rhine itself, but in the Austrian Netherlands and on the Danube. Pope, however, may have been thinking of the passage of the Rhine at Philipsburg after Blenheim (1704)—a position which Eugene failed to defend on two later occasions.

247. The explanation is that the wit's power lies in the quill-pen with which he writes, a general's in the bâton which was the symbol of a marshal's office. The phraseology is somewhat strained, and the antithesis contained in l. 248 is not obvious at first sight.

249—52. Probably Pope was thinking of the disinterment of Cromwell's body from its grave in Westminster Abbey, 30 Jan. 1660—1. The corpse was hanged at Tyburn. This is borne out by the allusion to Cromwell in l. 284 below.

253. but of true desert] Unless it be truly deserved.

255. One self-approving hour] Pope comes near to the doctrines of the stoicism which he elsewhere attacked.

256. huzzas] Notice the pronunciation, which was that of Pope's day. Crowds still say 'hooráy,' not 'hurrah' or 'huzzáh,' which are artificial pronunciations.

257—8. Marcus Marcellus, consul in 51 B.C., was an opponent of Caesar, and, on Caesar's triumphant advance and success at Pharsalia, he withdrew into exile, and occupied himself with philosophy at Mitylene. He was recalled from exile in 46 B.C., but was murdered at Piræus on his way to Rome. Warburton stated that, by Marcellus, Pope was supposed to mean James Butler, second duke of Ormonde, who had been attainted with Bolingbroke for treasonable correspondence with the Pretender, and was still living abroad: he died in 1745. But it seems much more likely that he was alluding to Bolingbroke himself, who, although not actually in exile, was in more or less enforced retirement, and was trifling with studies similar to those of the exiled Marcellus, while he aided by his counsel and pen the opposition to the king and the parliamentary majority ('Caesar with a senate at his heels'). This allusion would give infinitely more point to the passage, which, if it refers to Ormonde, is comparatively pointless.

265. This again may be an allusion to Bolingbroke's efforts to support the opposition in politics.

268. Sensibility to his own faults (l. 262) preserves the wise man from self-delusion, 'life's weakness.' The 'comforts' are the external advantages of life, honours, popularity, etc.

270. **mount]** Amount.

275. **call]** Call forth, arouse.

277. **ribbonds]** Cf. 'hung round with strings' (l. 205 above).

278. **Lord Umbra, or Sir Billy]** 'Sir Billy' is identified with 'Sir Will' of *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, l. 280, i.e. Sir William Yonge, Bart. and K.B., M.P. for Houniton, and a supporter of Walpole. He was a man of some parts: Lord Stanhope notes his too ready fluency of speech, and records Walpole's saying that 'nothing but Yonge's character could keep down his parts, and nothing but his parts support his character.' From the fact that 'Sir Will' is coupled in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* with 'Bubo,' i.e. Bubb Dodington, the favourite of Prince Frederick and the patron of Thomson, 'Lord Umbra' has been given the same identity. But Dodington was not given his peerage till 1761. Pope, however, must have had someone in his mind, and it is not unlikely that he meant John Hervey, who in 1733 had just been summoned to the house of lords as baron Hervey of Ickworth. Pope attacked him ferociously in the *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, ll. 305—33; and the phrase 'Lord Umbra' (*umbra* = shadow) might well be attached to one whose 'emptiness' and 'florid impotence' were there satirised. This is borne out by the allusion to Umbra in *Moral Essays*, Ep. i. l. 59, which was also written in 1733, 'When universal homage Umbra pays,' etc.

280. **Gripus...Gripus' wife.]** These characters, on the strength of ll. 289—308 below, have been identified with Marlborough and his duchess. Others, with possibly more reason, have thought that the lines were aimed at Edward Wortley Montagu and his celebrated wife, Lady Mary, daughter of Evelyn Pierrepont, duke of Kingston. Pope had been her friend and admirer, but, on being slighted by her, attacked her with bitter satire: see, e.g., the character of Sappho, *Moral Essays*, Ep. ii. ll. 24—6 and Ep. iii. ll. 121—2, in the second of which passages her avarice is not obscurely hinted at.

282. **meanest]** The criticism is extravagant: a rhetorical point is made at the expense of actual truth.

283. **whistling of a name]** The phrase is taken from Cowley's

translation of Vergil, *Georg.* II. 458 sqq., at the end of his fourth essay :

'Some swell up their slight sails with popular fame,
Charm'd with the foolish whistlings of a name.'

284. Cromwell] See note on ll. 250—2 above.

289. hearts of kings] So Dante, *Inferno* XIII. 58—59, makes Piero delle Vigne, the treacherous chancellor of the emperor Frederick II., say, 'I am he who held both the keys of the heart of Frederick,' etc.

290. How happy] I.e. what a form their happiness took, consisting in ruining the kings who trusted and the queens who loved them !

292. Venice] Venice is said to have been founded during the invasions of the Huns by refugees from Aquileia and Padua. The city was founded on the islands near the mouth of the Brenta.

295. The context points to the fact that these lines refer to the duke of Marlborough, who had died in 1722. The original version of ll. 295—8 read :

'Let gather'd nations next their chief behold,
How bless'd with conquest, yet more bless'd with gold !
Go then and steep thine age in wealth and ease,
Stretch'd on the spoils of plunder'd provinces.'

302. imperious wife] Sarah, duchess of Marlborough, whose character Pope drew as that of 'great Atossa' in *Moral Essays*, Ep. II. ll. 115—50—a merciless exposure of her ungovernable and fickle temper.

303—4. In 1704 Queen Anne granted the manor of Woodstock, Oxon, to the duke of Marlborough and his heirs, and parliament voted £500,000 for the building of Blenheim palace as a national memorial. Owing to Marlborough's loss of public favour, barely half this sum was paid, and the house, which he never inhabited, was completed at the expense of himself and his duchess. She erected the triumphal arch which is the chief entrance to the park. The architect of the house was Sir John Vanbrugh, who indulged in it his love of gigantic classical proportions.

303. story'd] I.e. painted with pictures of historical or legendary scenes. The ceiling of the great hall at Blenheim is

painted with an allegorical picture of the battle by Sir James Thornhill.

305—6. 'Be not misled by the splendour of such noon-tide prosperity, but take into account the beginning and end of the career.' Marlborough rose into favour by the patronage of Charles II's mistress, the duchess of Cleveland: he died of paralysis and senile decay.

315—16. The sense of the couplet is quite clear, but the construction is too elliptic. If virtue gain its end, the joy is unequalled: if it lose, the loss is attended with no pain.

318. **more relish'd]** It would be more true to say that virtue in distress is more relished as a spectacle by the philosopher than as a possession by the owner. The tragedies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, represented by such plays as Congreve's *Mourning Bride* and Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, ministered to a popular admiration for distressed virtue, the idealism of which formed a striking antithesis to the cynicism of contemporary comedy.

325. **where no wants]** I.e. where there are no wants.

331. **Slave to no sect]** The exclusive definitions of happiness by various philosophical sects have been referred to, ll. 19—26 above. Cf. also Ep. III. ll. 305—6. The private road is that of the zealot: the man whose life is in the right seeks God by preferring nature's road.

337. **the rising Whole]** The 'stupendous Whole' (Ep. I. l. 267) of the universe, rising from nothing to the Infinite (ibid. ll. 240—1).

341. **For him alone]** I.e. man is the only creature who has the gift of hope. Cf. Ep. III. ll. 77—8.

347—8. Other creatures are blessed with a natural instinct which leads them inevitably to realise their objects. So man, with the additional instinct of hope, has assurance of the realisation of immortal happiness.

349—52. The gift of hope connects benevolence, man's greatest virtue, with his eternal hope, and thus, providing man with the prospect of future bliss, becomes the motive of his conduct in order to deserve it.

359—60. The construction is again somewhat elliptic. The sense is consecutive, i.e., So grasp, etc., that you shall be happier in

proportion as you love your kind more, and that your height of happiness shall be the height of your love.

364. Cf. Pope's version of Chaucer's *House of Fame*, *The Temple of Fame*, ll. 436—47; 'As on the smooth expanse of crystal lakes,' etc. The simile is also used in a comic vein, *Dunciad* II. 405—10.

373. Pope concludes by addressing Bolingbroke, and the opening of the address may be taken as a direct confession of the inspiring influence which Bolingbroke exercised upon the poem. Pope's flattery was probably sincere; but Elwin, on l. 378, quotes an appropriate criticism from *A Letter to Mr Pope*, 1735: 'Did he (Bolingbroke) rise with temper when he drove furiously out of the kingdom the duke of Marlborough? or did he fall with dignity when he fled from justice and joined the Pretender?' He also quotes Lord Hervey's directly opposite criticism, 'Elate and insolent in power, dejected and servile in disgrace.'

378. **temper**] I.e. moderation.

379—80. The couplet is borrowed from Sir William Soame's *Art of Poetry*, translated from Boileau and corrected by Dryden, canto I. ll. 75—6:

'Happy who in his verse can gently steer,
From grave to light; from pleasant to severe.'

381. **Correct**] This adjective was used by Pope and his school as a general description of their aim in poetry. It implies a habit of thought in antagonism to the strained and inappropriate conceits and extravagances of wit which marked the poetry of the earlier part of the seventeenth century. The word is explained to some extent by the previous couplet. Correctness avoided forced and unnatural displays of wit or emotion: its ideal was the following of nature which Pope recommended no less in art than in ethics.

389. **pretend**] I.e. shew forth, proclaim.

391—2. Pope appears to regard the *Essay on Man*, not merely as marking a change in his own choice of subject, but as the beginning of a revolution in poetry. This was perhaps too much to claim; but it is unquestionable that he endeavoured in his poem, more seriously and successfully than any of his predecessors, to express his thoughts for their own sake, and not merely for the sake of the fancy with which they were clothed.

393. **wit's false mirror]** This applies primarily to his subordination of reason to instinct. But it also refers to the habit of wit in poetry, i.e. the indulgence of artificial fancy which was characteristic of the 'metaphysical' school in poetry. Cf. *Imitations of Horace, Epistle to Augustus*, ll. 75—6:

'Who now reads Cowley? if he pleases yet,
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit.'

394 -8. In each of ll. 394—7 the teaching of one of the four epistles is summarised. The last line repeats the theme of Ep. II. ll. 1, 2.

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